

*L. Dierckx. ex dono Joh. Panth. Autor
Nº 3 Epist. 74. Philit St. Jo. Rotterdam*

T H E
CONFIRMING WORKE
O F
RELIGION, II

In its necessity and use briefly held forth; that
each Christian may have a proper *ballast* of his
own, of the grounds and reasons of his
faith, and thus see the greatnesse of that
security, on which he adventures
his eternal state.

O R *Johanna St John*

The true and infallible way, for attaining a *con-*
firmed state in Religion, from these primary evi-
dences and demonstrations of our faith; which the
Lord hath himself given, so as it may be easy for
the meanest in the Church to know the same,
and be ready to render an account
thereof to all that ask.

With a short and confirming prospect of the
work of the Lord about his Church,
in these last times.

B Y
R. F L E M I N G,

*Minister of the Gospel of Christ.
Author of the Fulfilling of the
Scriptures*

At ROTTERDAM,
Printed by REINIER LEERS.
M. DC. LXXXV.

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

THE
SCHOOL OF THE
SACRAMENT

S. A. R. Denham
752

The PREFACE.

THis small Essay, here offered, is on the greatest subject, can fall under the consideration of mankind; and is a study, was never more pressingly called for, then in these dayes, for men to be making peace with God, and to have such an assurance of his truth, as can fully quiet and support the soul, though all sensible props should be brocken, and fail. Great changes doe surely hasten on this generation, and the life of faith, is in an other manner like to be put to tryal, then since the Churches rise and recovery from Antichristian bondage. The storme now visibly grows upon the Churches of Christ, though nothing is thus to faint or shake, the spirits of any, who know their anchor is sure and cast within the vail; but the strongest difficulties, in following the Lord, when overcome, yeelds the greatest victory, and will be not only matter of joy here, but to all eternity, in having with patience and hope indured, and got well through a throng of temptations and assaults in a resolute adherence to the truth. If men think it their wisdom to secure their private interest, by dividing it in such a time from the publick cause of the Reformed Church, and make light of the greatest truths of God now assaulted, of the blood of the Martyrs, yea of their own eternal state, by any coolnesse or shrin-

king from the same; they will find no temporal motives, can ever compensate that losse and ruine which inevitably will meet such in the issue, yea that these words of Mordecai to Esther, Esth. 4: 13, 14. have the same voice, and weight in this day. What is held forth in the following worke, I may with humble confidence say, was under some pressure to have such clear evidence and quieting perswasion of divine truth, as made it lesse easy to have my own spirit satisfied herein, then possibly it may be to others; for if it were not from that blessed assurance of the Lords being God, of the revelation of Christ, and of the glory to come, I should not know what could be comforting or make a rational being desireable. Some singulare ingadgments I judge my self also to stand under, for putting to my seal to the truth and faithfulnessse of God in his word, from many signal confirmations hereof in the course of my pilgrimage, if such a poor testimony might be of any weight. Let the blessed Lord, graciously accept this small offering to him, and for the interest of his truth, by so mean an instrument, and give some fruit hereof, that may abide, and be found in the day of Christ.

I hope the Reader may find by a perusal of the I. Chap. of what serious use and intent the II. is; yea that in this day it was not unseasonable or incongruous to the forgoing subject what is held forth in the III. Chapter. But oh it is sad and amazing to think how few are under that weight of Religion, as once to have a serious inquiry on the grounds and reasons thereof, and to accompt the most special assistances to their faith to be the greatest helpers of their joy within time.

The

T H E
True and infallible
W A Y

For attaining a confirmed state
in RELIGION, &c.

C H A P T E R I.

The Primitive Confirmation in the truth of Christianity, held forth and cleared, in its continued necessity and use to this day, in a few Positions.

THat nothing can have a more sad and threatening aspect *posit. I.* on the present state of religion in all the churches of Christ, then that utter estrangement, most are under, to the true grounds of faith, and to those fundamental differences betwixt Christianity, & every false way, which no pretended religion can lay claim to. The reasons of the *Position*, are these. I. That it is too visibly manifest, how no men in the

A world

world know so little of their own profession, were it of any human art or science, as such who bear the name of Christians, or are so generally strangers to the truth and firmness of the principles thereof, for maintaining either a due valuation, or powerful sense of the same on their soul; so that an implicit and *traditional profession* is the only part and propriety which most can claim in the truth, and doctrine they profess.

II. That so rare also is any such serious worke amongst men, as a personal inquiry and tryal, if there be indeed such a thing as an *experimental and soul quickning religion* in the earth, that can bear the expense of the most dismal and afflicting times, and hath so great a temporal revenue lying therto, as peace with God, an immediate communion with him, the joy and comforts of the *H. Ghost*, when under such pressours of trouble as are above the support of nature. III. That the furthest account, why most goe under the name of Christians, rather than of any other forme, can rise no higher than custom and education, that it did bespeak them from their birth, and was the religion of their ancestours, yea become in that manner naturall to them, as the customs and language of their country; which are grounds that should determineto the very
oppo-

opposite profession, if they were stated under the same circumstances, and had the same motives to be *Mahumetans*; since it is sure these can find no other assent, then is suitable to the nature and strength thereof IV. That thus it cannot be under debate, how the most numerous part of visible professors, are so destitute of any defense from internal motives, and solid conviction of the truth they profess, upon its own evidence; as there was never more cause to fear, some unusual apostacy from the very visible profession of Christ, upon any violent trial and assault this way, when such finds it more easy to render up their religion, then to adhere to the same, under strong temptations, who yet never knew that substance, advantage, or certainty herein, as could preponderate with the want of all external motives for such a profession.

That thus one of the highest services of *Posit. II.* these times, for the publick good of the Church, does convincingly lye here; to have *the faith of assent* to the truth and doctrine of Christ, in a clear and firme certainty of the judgment, on its own evidence, more vigorously promot, and the proper means and assistances, which the Lord hath given for this end, in some other manner yet improven, then seems to be this day,

for a more universal use. The grounds to inforce the necessity hereof, are these; I. that its sure wherever the Gospel is revealed to men, it comes with so full an assurance of understanding, and sufficiency of objective evidence, as can admit no possible doubtfulness herein, which is the credit and glory of our religion, that in no other way it doth require acceptance, but with the furthest conviction of evidence. II. Because the expresse designe and tendency of this blessed revelation, is no lesse to found such a *rational assurance* in the judgment, of its truth, then to ingadge their will and consent, for imbracing therof; and though such great demonstrations for this end can only, *in suo genere*, have a convincing influence to perswade the understanding, yet are they of such weight here, as next to the demonstration of the Spirit of God, they are the greatest means to bring up mens assent to a full and quieting rest on that security to which they must concredite themselves for ever, and to let them see, that this even here by the way, is assuredly full, though not yet their injoyment. III. Because this faith of assent, should be first followed in the order of nature, as being the very first principle of conversion, to know and be sure, that God hath sent his son into the

the world to save sinners; wherein as the *H. Ghost* is not the objective, but the efficient cause here of our faith, so is not the internal worke and testimony he gives on the soul the first testimony, but must still have respect to the revelation of the word without, and such demonstrative evidences therof, wherewith it is revealed to the world, nor may ever be separate, that which God hath himself so indissolubly joyned. IV. That so convincing a necessity and use is hereof to the Church, and in a special way with respect to the youth, for a more firme laying of the groundwork of their Christian profession, and to be as the seed-plot of a blessed and desirable growth amongst such in this day; that they might thus know early, something of these primary grounds and demonstrations of their faith; so also is it a study of that high importance, as I humbly judge, should be of notable use for a Manuduction in the first place to students of *Divinity*, before they launch forth in that vast and immense ocean of the speculative part therof; and for being at some greater advantage thus for carying on such a confirming worke in the Church in their future service. V. Yea of what use might this be with respect to many, who may be sore haunted, with hid and dreadful temptations to infidelity, and

to weaken them on the very foundations of their faith; who are wholly unfurnished of any such grounds and arguments in their judgment to repel the same: and it is sure, to believe firmly the history of the Gospel, *that God was manifested in our nature*, to save man, is with respect to the object a much higher act of faith, then to believe, that he will save us; since as the one doth unspeakably more transcend all human reason then the other, so doth the Apostle thus argue from the greater to the lesse, Rom. 8: 32. *That he who gave his own son to the death; will he not also with him give us all things.*

Posit.
III.

That such a confirming worke, was most specially followed in the practize of the primitive times, and one of the great ends of the ministry of the *Apostles and Evangelists*, to have this faith of assent and doctrinal certainty therof, on its proper grounds and evidences, deeply founded in mens judgment; is so clear, as cannot come under debate. I. That this way did the great author of our profession himself take, not only by the authority of his word, and the power and energy of grace, but with that convincing evidence and demonstration of his truth to mens understanding, as might found also a firme and rational assurance hereof. II. That for this end, he did pray
the

the Father, *Joh. 17: 21.* and was so much pressed herein, that so great an external demonstration of the truth of the Gospel, in the concord and unity of his people, might be kept clear, that the world might thus believe that he was sent of God, and have a deeper conviction hereof served on them, by such an evidence. III. That one special intent of the Evangel of Luke, was for this end, *Luke 1: 4.* that men might know not only the things themselves by a naked relation, but the certainty of these things, wherein they had been formerly instructed. IV. That herein did the ministry of *Apollos* so brightly shine forth, *Act. 18: 28.* and was then of most singulare use to the Church, by that clearnesse of rational conviction and demonstrative arguments for the truth of Christ, as the greatest gainsayers could not withstand. V. That its sure it was then without exception, expressly required of the meanest within the Church, to be allways ready to render the reasons of their hope to all who ask; and not only to know what they did believe, but why they did so, as is clear *1 Pet. 3: 15.* yea that this could not be by bringing forth of internal evidences, for conviction of others, but to give them an account of the most cogent grounds and demonstrations of the Gospel,

as might be most prevalent, and confirming to the weak, and leave others inexcusable; and seems to have been then specially pressed in these primitive times, as a proper test of their Christian profession. VI. And we see herein also, how much these excellent *Bereans* were taken up, and were so highly commended of the *H. Ghost*, *Act. 17: 11.* to know the *demonstrative* part of Christianity, and by its own evidence, with that intire harmony and consent of the Scripture therein, and their being thus diligently intent in that comparing-worke of religion, to see the truth therof not singly and apart by themselves alone, but in that joynt union and coherence, wherein they stand, each in their own room, for confirming and giving light to other. VII. That this was the way also, wherein the Gospel did come to the Gentil church is cleerly shewed *1 Thess. 1: 5.* *Not in word only, but as in power, and in the H. Ghost, so also in much assurance of understanding, upon its own evidence;* which was that way, it did so wonderfully prevail over the world against nature, and stream of flesh and blood, that stood in the furthest opposition therto. VIII. That one of the greatest services of the Apostles in their visiting the Churches, did expressly ly here *Acts 14: 22.* to confirme the souls of
the

the Disciples in the first place on the certainty of their faith, and then in exhorting them to continue in the same, so as they might follow the Lord, with the furthest light and assurance of mind, amidst the great tryalls of such a time. IX. That its this way also the world is rendred inexcusable for their misbeliefe of the Gospel, when under such sufficiency of means given for this end, by so great a discovery of the confirming evidences of its truth, so as they can have no pretence herein, but an obstinacy and resolution not to be convinced; on which ground doth our blessed Lord testify, that it was no want of light, upon the certainty of his truth, why men did not receive it, but that they loved darknesse better then light, because their deeds were evil; & when such clear, rational, and convincing evidences are laid open to their view, how most possibly can get these put by or rejected, is not easy to comprehend, but that a real irritation and torment of spirit, from such clearnesse of evidence, doth thus more tend to harden then convince.

That there is a continued necessity of such *Posit.*
a confirmation in the faith to this day, what *IV.*
 ever can be objected of so long a consent
 and prescription of time in the profession
 therof, is fully demonstrable on these
 A 5 grounds.

grounds. I. Because it is sure, the Christian faith doth still need these assistances; and is a strang mistake, that only for *Heathens, and Atheists*, such confirming evidences of the same should be adduced, but not for any under a visible profession, when the whole of *divinity*, and *doctrine of our faith*, is so full of demonstrative arguments, for the dayly use of the most established Christians in their passage through time. II. That as the highest motives to all serious godlinesse and the moral duties of Christianity must needs be from its known certainty to us, so is the continued use therof to be still the same. III. That these numerous tryalls and conflicts of Christians now, doe no lesse call for some higher establishment in the truth on which they must alone rest, when all visible props fail in their judgments, then of supporting grace; nor is it conceivable how men can this day walk in the light of any true joy and comfort, without a more sollid assurance of their being on safe grounds herein then most seem to reckon. IV. Because the revelation of the Gospel and of an eternal state in an other world, is so great and wonderfull as its strang how this is not the highest interest of mens life, to have their faith more deeply confirmed on the furthest tryal of their security now
by

by the way herein, who must shortly make so great a tryal therof at death; for if we were but once this lenth to ask our own soul, what the *Christian faith* indeed is, and are thus called to believe, it could not possibly but beget some extasy of wondering at the greatnesse therof, and to reckon any light and implicit assent to the same as a degree both of Atheism & indifferency in this matter. V. Though there be no conflict with *Heathens* as in the *first times*, yet was such a spirit never more aloft then it is now to take of all firm assent to the greatest principles of truth, when *Atheisme* seems to be at its *ultimus conatus* in the world, and we are fallen in so amazing an hower of the power of darknesse as makes these latter times more remarkably perillous and trying then the first. VI. Yea if such a confirming worke, be one of the greatest means to advance the repute and honour of religion, when its wonted awe and veneration is so far lost, and to awake men to deeper impressions of its truth, when so few seeme now under any such weight; then it is sure there was never more need of the same then in this day.

That such a service to the *Church*, doth *Posit. V.* not only respect the more knowing, inquisitive, and judicious part therof, but the meanest professors of religion also, of whom

whom this is necessarily required, is evident on these *grounds*. I. Because each Christian should have undoubtedly such a *ballast* on their own soul, of the solid and rational grounds of their faith, as well as these of greater parts and induments: the promoting of which were it more deeply considered, I dare humbly adventure to say, should be found one of the choicest means to promote Christianity this day. II. Because this is not to drive any to doubt or question the least sincere degree of *assent*, though it be not with such strenght of evidence as in others, nor can by that formal argumentation give the same accompt therof; since a few grounds this way may specially help to some solid conviction and confirming of their mind, when they may be ignorant of many other cogent arguments for this end; but its sure also the greater clearnesse of evidence doth still in the appointed way of means lead in to a more firme and strong assent of the judgment, to the truth of our religion. III. Becaus the strenth of the foundation in it self cannot be enough if it be not with such a known evidence, as men may build firmly and with assurance thereon; nor hath the Lord thus only designed to give his people an infallible and sure testimony to adventure on, but that it should be made

made sure also to them. I V. Because none can in truth say that *Jesus is the Lord* but by the *H. Ghost*, 1 Cor. 22: 3. by which is not to be understood so much there, the necessity of supernatural grace, for a saving faith, but that none can give a true assent and confession of the same, but from these grounds and arguments which are revealed by the *H. Ghost* unto men for this end; and as its sure that these *characters and evidences of divinity*, which are imprinted on the whole revelation of the Gospel, may be clear & demonstrative to our judgment, so are they as truly *divine*, as the doctrine which is confirmed therby. V. Because there can be no possible cause for credulity of the truth from any intricate obscureness of the same, when the Lord hath given such great assistances to our faith to be *as milk for babes* as well as *meat to strong men*. And though it be objected that the furthest objective evidence of the Gospel, with so clear and strong a conveyance therof, is yet so little operative on most; the same might be said also of the whole letter of the Scripture; but as this tends not in the least to resolve our religion into any meer exercise of reason, and leaves the whole worke of the Spirit, in its energy and operation therewith on mens souls, intire; yet doth it fully evince such a sufficiency of evidence

dence with the Christian faith, as makes any doubtfulnesse herein simply impossible, through want of the greatest advantage of means; yea such as are of another kind then to induce only a *probable perswasion* of the same. VI. Because it is one of the saddest symptoms of the present state of religion, that so few almost in whole congregations can give any clear assent to the truth and certainty thereof, but to amazment both live and dye strangers to the same, yea how many of these who are otherwise serious in religion, yet have their *faith starved* this way, and are destitute of any such support; but as it is not the *numberousnesse of professors*, but the *strength and solidity of their faith*, wherein the Churches strength most lyes, and hath more flowrished in a few such to beget a greater awe and veneration of religion amongst men, then at other times in the greatest multitude; so is it the glory of divine truth, that it can subsist by its own proper evidence, and preserve its station in the worst of times, when all external arguments does most visibly cease.

Posit.
V I.

That its thus fully demonstrable and clear, how no simple instructing of men in the *general principles of religion*, can be the proper and adequate mean for such a faith of assent to the truth thereof, on its own evidence.

or

or answer that *Apostolick pattern of laying the foundation*, Hebr. 6: 2. but that some special duties else are called for to so high an end; such wherein not only that true primitive confirmation in the Christian faith might have some practical use, but we might also hope therewith, for a more remarkable out-letting of confirming influences of the Spirit of God. What is to be understood herein I shall humbly offer in a few *particulars*.

I. That it is one of the greatest concerns of the *ministerial worke*, and of the *key of doctrine*, to have all who heare the Gospel, in the *First* place pressed to take religion so far to heart as to have a serious inquiry on the grounds and reasons hereof, and thus to know their being on sure ground herein, not because they know not another way, but because they know this is the alone way of truth, to which they dar trust their immortal soul. II. That for this end the supreme truths of religion be represented with that certainty of *evidence, and demonstration*, as both such great and marvelous things does require, and the temper of such a gainsaying age now calls for; and to have this pressed more on mens judgment and conscience, that the *things of God*, which are of the *highest consequence, reality, and substance*, can have no possible reception by any implicit or probable

bable belief thereof, nor can admit any pretence for the same, when the Lord hath given such kind of proofes and evidence, as leaves mens darknesse herein, without any shaddow of excuse.

II. That it peculiarly belongs to the *Catechetical work of religion* to take some account of the meanest professors thereof, and with a special respect to the *youth*; of their *faith of assent* to the doctrine of Christ, on what *grounds* and certainty of evidence this is founded, and for their instructing therein, as well as in the *general principles* of religion; when one of the most ruining things to the Church lyes here, that the profession of most is layed in so deep an ignorance, as they have almost nothing to say for the same, but a naked affirmation. I know the difficulty hereof for the weak may be objected, but without just cause; since as the prime truths of religion are few, easy and plaine for the meanest capacity, so also are the *primary evidences and demonstrations of our faith*, if such once with that desire did search after the same as for a hid and invaluable treasure; wherein this respect should be still had, to difference betwixt what is initial and of a more fundamental concern for the weak, and what may tend to an higher growth and increase of others.

III. It should be of greatest use and advantage also for the same end, that the *young growth* now coming up in the Church; were put to give some *explicit evidence* of their consent and choice of the profession of Christ, so far as may witnesse a ratification of the *baptismal covenant*, now as their own proper deed, wherein they were implicitly ingadged in their infancy. Some special grounds and reasons for this are; I. Because God will have his service freely entered in and upon *choise*, as that way which is most agreeable to his honour; for as the *covenant* binds mutually, so doe the *seals* therof also, and therfor, upon our part is *baptisme a sacramental oath of aledgence to God*. II. Because it tends to a more resolute and firme adherence to the service of God, that this businesse should be personally brought home to mens conscience, especially before their first admittance to the Sacrament of the Lords supper, and thus to ingadg them as *Joshua* did *Chap. 24: 22. Ye are witnesses against yourselves herein, and they said we are witnesses*. III. Because this is expressly held forth *1 Pet. 3: 21. where baptisme is called the answer of a good conscience toward God*, upon this ground, that such then who were come to years of knowledge, were personally sisted to confirme by their own consent that

B

solemne

solemne ingadgment and dedication by Baptisme to be the Lords, and therefor it is called ἐπεώνημα, which is *vox juris*, and signifies, *sponsio*, & *stipulatio publica inter Christianum, & Dominum Christum*, as the most judicious Commentators on that scripture does clearly render; and so this was a special part of the primitive practize, not only with respect to such, who were converted from *Heathenisme*, but were born within the Church and partakers of that *seal of Baptisme in their infancy*, to siste them upon answer to that great demand of the Covenant, doe yow now consent upon *evidence and choise* to be the Lords and to be a subject of his Kingdom, and embrace the lawstherof, and doe yow thus in sincerity and truth declare the same wherein you have a good conscience before God. And of what blessed fruit and advantage should this be both for the increase and honour of the Gospel, if this were more deeply taken to heart for some practical use, according to the *rule*, and *primitive pattern* in the Churches of Christ.

IV. It were specially desirable also, that there be some *clear view and summary* by it self, of the most *cogent grounds and demonstrations of the Christian faith*, with respect both to the *Doctrinal, Historical, and Prophetical*

phetical part therof, and in that manner accommodate, as the meanest within the Church might have such a help still at their hand, and thus with the least expense of time, be provided of such arguments and reasons, as should tend (through the blessing of God) not only to the furthest rational assent, and certainty of the truth of their profession, but to give a most special support of mind against that inward tryal of Satans temptations and fiery darts this way; yea is such a mean, that in the serious improvment herof by having such evidences once brought in on mens judgment and conscience, so as to see with their own eyes the truth of the same, I must humbly judge, there is nothing, next to the internal work of the Spirit, of this kind might tend more to promote the Kingdom of Christ in this day.

I shal but add this further on the present *posir.* subject, that as there are some more *signal* ^{V I I.} *periods of time*, to which a greater brightnesse and increase of light hath respect under the *New Testament*, so doth there now seem to be some remarkable call and excitment, to such a *confirming work*, in this day about the Christian faith; when we may hope that a more *solemne and restoring time of religion* in the world, is on a near approach, (though

all sensible evidence would seem to control this) and may be now more looked after, then prepared for, under any suitable impression of these *grounds* for the same. I. That the promised time of the *conversion of the Jewes* doth assuredly draw near; and whatever be judged by some of the Lords immediate appearance herein by a *miracle*, yet is it unquestionable that nothing in the way of means could be more promising and hopeful to promot this great end, then in promoting so great a service as this for the Christian Church. II. That a greater extent also of the profession of Christ amonghst the Gentils, and renting of the vaile that is now over many dark nations, seemeth clearly insured therwith; and what a hopeful evidence should this be if such a *publick and catholick spirit* were more seen, how to advance the highest ends of religion on such an accompt without respect to any partial or divided interest; yea that this blest zeal of God might in that manner appear to have the dark world get a more clear and convincing prospect of the *highest rational demonstrations of Christianity*, as might through the Lords gracious concurrence bring men once to an *inquisitive and serious spirit* about the same. Oh that such may be thus raised up in this dismal hower with
some-

something of that ancient spirit , to travel with desire for the *salvation of mankind*, and of whom it may be said, as of blest *Nehe-miah* , *these are indeed come to seek the welfare of their people*, in their greatest interest.

III. And this farther excitment we are now under for this end , in a time when Popery seems to be upon one of its last and greatest assaults against the Church ; since its so clear what ever tends to confirm men in Christianity from their own tryal and inquiry upon the confirming evidences therof, must have the same native result, to make such confirmed Protestants ; yea nothing is more demonstrable then that the method and grounds that are taken both to ingadge and fix men in the Popish profession , have the same rational tendency to promot Atheism, and to give infidels the greatest advantage to reject the profession of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

The confirming worke of Religion, reduced to practical use; in some clear view of these primary grounds, and demonstrations of our faith; which none should pretend ignorance of, who enters the profession of Christ upon choise, and certainty of evidence.

SECTION I.

Q^U. I. **W**Hat reasons, and demonstrations, can yow give for so great a faith of the glorious being of God, when he is invisible to humane sense, since this is the fundation of all religion?

A^NS^W. Though on the sacred truth and authority of his own word, this is principally founded, yet I am with the furthest infallible *evidence* herein confirmed; I. That it can be no more sure, this marvellous frame of the heavens and earth hath a being, and is the object of our sense, then that a supreme infinite wisdom and power must be the first cause hereof, and it were simply impossible it could ever otherwise have been. II. That he hath thus made himself *visible* to our eyes by such a *visible world*, and in so exquisite
an

an order and correspondence there to support the same, as nothing stands alone by it self, but in a line of mutual respect, which runs through the whole creation, whom we may as clearly thus see, as that there is an invisible soul in a living body. III. That this harmony is amongst things, in their own nature so contrare and destructive to other, for to hold this wonderful frame, as all must abandon reason, or see an infinitely wise conduct herein; and no need of extraordinary *miracles*, to confirme what the whole constitutions of nature do witnesse. IV. That this rare frame of man could never have come in being, but by him who could unite such different substances as a *material body*, and an *immaterial soul*, in so near and marvelous an union. V. That such an universal consent of mankind is in all ages therto, as shews religion to be founded in the very nature of man, and as essential to his being, as his reason is, yea how the ultimate difference of man from the beast, and most essential property of human nature lyes here. VI. That though every one be an enemy to what torments him; yet was it never possible for an Atheist to free himself from that unavoidable sense and fear of a *Deity*; nor, in a world so much lost in wickednesse, could ever extinguish the awe of

religion , or make any rational opposition to this greatest article of the common faith of mankind. VII. That the reason of the whole constitution of nature , and vicissitude of things here, is so great, as, without shutting out the use of reason, we cannot but see, how nothing possibly could have been better; and that any want hereof in the whole frame of the universe, would be as the dislocation of a joynt of the body, and were not conceivable to be otherwise then it is by infinite wisdom appointed. VIII. That its simply impossible that God blessed for ever should not exist, or that this universe, (which is a worke so highly becoming the greatnesse of its maker) could possibly subsist for one hour or minute of time, without a supreme independent power and being, on which all visible beings have their dependance, since they cannot depend upon nothing. IX. That such is the absolute necessity of the *faith also of a God-head*, as without this the state of mankind could not *morally* subsist, or any possible order, subjection, piety, and justice, be to support human society, but as *Bradwardine* saith, *O quam necesse est hunc esse, quem impossibile est non esse!* O that men cannot but see these effects of his power on the conscience, in the certainty of a profetick light
and

and discovery, as hath been oft given of future things, and in the undenyable truth of miracles, so as such a *prodigy* as a profest *Atheist*, can have no claime to human race, as a rational being, more then the greatest *monster* in nature to be a true man.

Q u. II. What doth witnesse the *worlds* not being *eternal*, and its first original and beginning from God, to confirme your faith herein, by the further rational demonstration.

A n s. I. That as an eternity is only communicable to the first cause, so that which is made up of corruptible & perishing things, as this visible world, cannot possibly be in it self *eternal*; nor could ever produce it self, since thus it must both exist and not exist at the same time, which is the greatest contradiction. II. That if there be such a thing now *as time*, there can be no judging of dayes, yeares and ages to be infinite, or how one thing in a continued order, should thus goe before another, without coming to some first beginning. III. If there be a gradual advance of human learning on the earth, and a further discovery of arts and sciences; and that the greatest experiments and inventions there have been but of a late rise and date; then can there not possibly be an eternal succession of mankind, with a

continued progresse and experiency this way ; nor that but of late one part of the world is known and discovered to another. IV. That so short an history as we have in the most ancient records of time , were wholly inconsistent with such an eternal duration , or that infinite ages preceeding, should leave no remembrance to posterity, when so small a measure of time, as a few *thousand years*, have left so much. V. Nor could men beget other eternally without going back to some first man , who could not beget himself. VI. That if eternity be preferable to time, then should not the excellentest being in the earth, *man*, be thus corruptible, and only this inanimate masse of the earth eternal. VII. That infinite ages past, though they should have but multiplied the race of man in an age , to two or three more, should have come at last, that the whole precinct of the earth could not possibly bear the product of such an infinite increase ; and no wears or extraordinary judgments were ever yet known to be such, as to restrain such an unavoidable growth.

Qu. III. What infallible evidence to reason is there of a *supream Providence*, both in the *conservation, and government of the world*; for confirming your faith of the Scripture herein?

ANSW.

Ans. I. That it is so clear the support of this great frame of the Universe, with that continued & regular course of nature herein, are as simply impossible without an infinite divine power, as its first being and creation.

II. That such an extent of providence as respects so innumerable objects, with such a contrariety both of qualities and passions in the same, must needs be from an infinite and intelligent cause. III. That all things

to this day, continue in that established order of second causes, wherein God hath placed them by a law so visibly imprinted on the nature of things without reason, that they doe as exactly answer the same in their proper course and station, as if they had a rational knowledge of their duty. IV. That

universal respect, the *sun in the firmament* hath to things here below, though at so great a distance, yet doth neither cease, nor weary to emit its beams and hid influences to the meanest creatures, may let us clearly see, how it hath the same visible use and end to confirme an incomprehensible and infinite providence about the meanest things, as well as the greatest. V. That immediate

precedency of the soul in that lesser world of man, bears the same evidence therewith; which though we never saw with our eyes, yet doth undenyably actuate the whole body

dy

dy in its functions, as the proper spring of every act and motion there. VI. It is thus further confirmed, by these continued vicissitudes of *Summer and Winter*, and of *day and night*, that man might have, both light for his labour, and darknesse as a covering for his rest. VII. By such visible discoveries of *divine judgment and execution* of his laws on men here, as all may see his hand therein, who yet will not hear his voice in the word. VIII. By these extraordinare and wonderfull works of providence, which have been in all ages. IX. By so evident a restraint both over *Devils, and wicked men*, without which they would quickly disturbe the whole frame of this earth, and make it uninhabitable for human society; if their being thus bounded and chained, were not as visible, as the certainty of their being. X. By such a *natural obligation* to moral duties, with the sense of a difference betwixt good and evil, as is founded in the very rational nature of man, that none can possibly root out, even where the Scripture is not known. XI. By that natural confidence also in God, and in a recourse to him on any present extreme hazard, to witnesse, not only the most high beares rule in the kingdomes of men, but that the sense and evidence hereof is unavoidable.

Qu.

Qu. IV. But doth this great *administration of providence*, about human affaires as uncheangably appear, in a *differencing* betwixt the righteous and the wicked, by some recompence to the one, and punishment to the other, as in the established course of nature.

Ans. It is sure such as desire a confirming of their faith herein, wants it not, with the furthest evidence, but may ever see that exact conformity in the whole dispensation of providence, to the rectitude and perfection of the divine nature, and how a firm believe *that God is*, and *that he is a revarder of them that diligently seek him*, is one and the same faith; when we cannot but see, I. That natural sense of good and evil, and essentiall difference betwixt the same, which is so firmly founded in the reason of all mankind, as no human laws or custome could ever take this off their conscience, or make an indifference herin, without extinguishing the very nature of man; to shew that eternal and uncheangable difference, which the holy nature of God hath put betwixt them. II. That we see such constraint served on the worst of men, to an awful sense and regard of *truth and weal doing*, and to acknowledge the lovelenesse and excellency hereof, as does make them seek their own

re-

repute by a false shew and counterfite of the same; and gives such a being and rise to that dreadful imposture of *hypocrisy*. III. That its the *truths* priviledge ever to outlive *falsehood*, and prevail over the same, yea to have the greater triumph after its forest conflicts; and how this is of as foundational a constitution in the course of providence, as the most firm establishment of nature. IV. That in no time since man was formed in the earth, doth true *joy and serenity of mind*, cease to be the native result of *wealth*, or the *fruit of righteousness*, to be peace and assurance of mind, nor hath ever wanted a witness even before the world of the Lords taking pleasure herein. V. That its so evident, in the most dismal times, what a publick *blessing*, such are, who by more extraordinary tryals have been put to the highest exercise of their grace and patience; yea how visibly such have been promot to the most honourable service for God, and to advance the credite of religion before men, who on the first sight and view have been accounted the most miserable of any. VI. Whilst, *on the other hand*, it may be ever seen, how with the greatest *prosperity* of the wicked here, there are *punishments of another kind* dispensed, and more dreadful then any outward affliction, such as *judicial*

sial obstinacy, and blindnesse of mind in opposition to God, even when their own ruine is made visible to them herein. VII. How oft men are thus evidently condemned to be happy in this world by some strang measure of *temporall successe and prosperity*, before some great fall and ruine, as the issue hereof in the last shene of providence doth fully attest. VIII. That its seen also, how sin doth ever bring its own *punishment* therewith, in some begun degree both of shame and torment; and, as *Seneca*, an heathen could say, *that wickednesse was the most exquisite contriver of human misery*, so the world likewise may see how a present immunity from judgment is no release, but when its sentence is not *speedily execute*, yet is it at last surely execute. IX. And how evident is it, that the greatest haters of godlinesse are yet inforced to justify the same and the Christians choise herein, as the greatest wisdom, upon any surprising state and extremity; yea how such would be glad to joyne interests then with such in their death, whom they most contemned in their life.

Qu. V. How is it convincing and demonstrable, that God hath given any clear and expres revelation of his will and counsel unto men, and that such a *wonderfull record* is undoubtedly extant in the world.

ANSW.

ANSW. That, I. it is not possible to believe the *being of God*, and not also the truth of an established *law*, and rule of commerce betwixt him and man here, so as to know both what we should doe, and what to expect and hope from him. II. That this also must be known and display its power and efficacy to the world, in that manner and by such infallible evidence of its truth, as may render all inexcusable, who give not intire credite therto. III. I can be no more clear and assured there is but one *sun in the firmament*, then that there is but one *fountain*, and *repository of sacred light* about religion, which is the *Scripture*, and its being the alone publick standard of truth to the whole world. IV. That no way was ever made known to recover mankind from a state of bondage, darknesse, and misery, compatible with the very use of reason, but by this blessed light which shineth there. V. Yea that there is as visible a difference, betwixt the same and any pretended religion which ever was besides in the world, as there is *betwixt day and night*, which is founded in the immutable nature of these things in themselves. VI. That there is one proper *sphere*, where this glorious light of divine truth is fixed, and wherein it shines forth from one age to another; which is the Christian Church. Qu.

Qu. VI. But what more peculiare evidences can yow shew of the *divinity of the Scriptures*, that all may see to be of infallible truth.

ANSW. I. That its sure such a *book* is this day in the earth, which no created wisdom could ever have done, and contains such things of highest concern to mankind, as doe infinitely exceed the bounds of human ability and invention, or could ever have been discovered but by God himself. II. That it gives forth such exquisite *laws* and constitutions of our religion, as men must needs see the *holy nature, purity, and perfection of God*, most brightly shining forth therein. III. Which doth discover so great and proper a relief for all these evils and miseries that doe attend this fallen estate of man, as none but an allsufficient God could only doe. IV. That he alone must be the author of this blessed record, who rules the world, and hath determined the changes and revolutions therof, when it is not more evident how these visible heavens are stretched forth over the earth, then that this *line of the Scripture* is stretched over the whole worke and *frame of providence*, and doth most clearly illuminate the same. V. That surely this was the product of infinite wisdom, whence so great a variety of matter, doth meet with so visible a concent and har-

mony in one perfect and intire frame; yea knit in so crosse a bond of union together, as makes the whole Bible to be intirly *one piece*; though in the writing of each distinct part therof it could never have possibly been contrived or forseen by humane wisdom, what we see here of so admirable an agreement & correspondence, as is in all the parts therof. VI. That none els could have spoke to the world, in so majestick a way, & becoming the greatnesse and soveraignity of God, to assume such a supremacy, & give forth laws for absolute obedience from all mankind therto, & on such a penalty of eternal destruction; or that any impostures, either possibly could, or durst have, in such a manner, personate the same. VII. That it must needs be his word who perfectly knows what is in man, and hath an absolute authority over the soul, and is a discernor of the thoughts therof, who thus not only gives law to the conscience, and our inward parts, but doth establish an internal religion there, no lesse absolutly, then what respects our external worke and actions. VIII. Yea where all may see the whole penmen therof under so intire a subjection to the doctrine which they taught, and to be no contrivance of their own, as they did record their own failings, and imperfections in behalf of the truth;

truth; and did thus also require all just respect and obedience to the Magistrates, when through the whole earth they were then greatest enemies to the truth of the Gospel. IX. That this must be his word, who alone can derive principles of life to his own institutions, and animate the same with a quickning Spirit; and is a worke above the contrivance of Angels or men, when directed to each new tryal of the Church, and personal case of Christians, as though it had been alone writt for that time; so that I can be no more perswaded in reason there is such a book as the *Bible* in the earth, then that it came from heaven, and is the alone rule of religion, and of divine revelation, for the governing of mankind.

QU. VII. How is the secure conveyance of the *Scripture* demonstrable amidst all the changes of times past, and that no possible access could be for its corruption.

ANSW. I. That its so undenyably the first rule which ever was given to mankind of religion, and the alone *publick standard of truth*, that hath endured the tryal and inquiry of all times past, so as no pretences in the matter of antiquity could yet ever be to the contrare. II. That so exact an *harmony* is betwixt *the Old and New Testament*, as the one is a visible transcript of the other, in

its accomplishment; that I can be no more sure of such a venerable record as the Old Testament, and its unalterable conveyance to the Church, to which the whole race of the Jewes is yet a standing witnesse, then how it is continued and perfected in the revelation of the Gospel, and but one intire frame. III. That its deliverance was no private deed, but by a publick trust to the whole universal Church; so as it were more easy in the way of reason to question the most fundamental statutes and lawes of any nation, by which mens private right and property is secured, then the truth hereof. IV. That under the Gospel it hath been so fully dispersed over the world, and in such various languages; as an innumerable company of Christians these 1600 years past, hath been as a common library of the same. V. That these numerous versions and commentaries transmit thereon in diverse languages, doe fully evidence they had the same Scripture, and no other then what we have this day. VI. That this was delivered to the Church not only in write, but in that forme of sound words, for keeping close therby, as could admit no possible accessse to corrupt or alter the same; besides the continued and publick reference hath been since the first ages of the Gospel to its decision, which

which all these sharpe controversies, that have been in the Church on all sides, doe inevitably require.

Qu. VIII. What doth confirme the fall of man, and entry thus of sin into the world, this way, from clear and unavoidable evidences of reason.

ANSW. I. That there is such a thing as sin and evil in the world, with the sense and conscience of guilt arising hereon, amongst all mankind, can need no proof or evidence. II. That it is simply impossible this should have been originally created with man, or essentially belonging to his first frame and constitution, since then there could be no conscience of guilt or remorse, for what was given to be a part of himself, in his first frame; or be any sin, to act thus suitably to their own original state. III. That it were not conceivable also how one part of *man* should be in such opposition to another. IV. Nor that such a thing as *inherent shame* could be in the nature of man, upon the sense of *guilt*, and by so natural a result follow the same, or that such should be ashamed of any part of his *own being*, if this were not upon an undoubted *apostacy* from what once he was, and that inevitable conviction of conscience that he now is what he ought not to be, so as the certainty of *mans fall*

C 3

though

though alone revealed in the Scripture, as to the true cause thereof, yet may be as evident to *reason*, as the truth of his being now is.

SECTION II.

Qu. I. **A**Re there such *assistances* to the Christian faith upon that great and astonishing mystery of the revelation of Christ to the world as can fully answer the greatnesse thereof from cleare and infallible evidence to mens judgement?

ANSW. It is sure there could nothing possibly be desired more to satisfy the most doubtfull and suspicious minde then is given for the furthest certainty hereof. I. That such a *glorious person* as the *Messiah* was to come, and be *anoynted* to that great work of *redeeming mankind* from sin and misery and bring man back again unto God; and how this *promise* is the alone foundation, whereon the *church* was founded since man fell. II. That all these numerous *types and sacrifices* under the *law*, did so expressly tend to confirm their faith of that one blessed *propitiatory sacrifice* which was to be offered up. III. That long er the *New Testament* was writ, there was so cleare and exact a portraicture of the *Messias* drawn forth in the *old*, with such peculiar marks whereby he

he should be knowen to the *church*, and have infallibly taken place in the event as men could not upon any *Scripture evidence* expect his comming in another way. I V. That his *humiliation and sufferings* were so expresly shewed forth and foretold, with the peculiar circumstances thereof in the *53. chap. of Isaiah*, and *9. of Daniel*, as if they had been eye wittneses of the accomplishment thereof. V. That even the speciall *season* and period of time for outmaking of this *great promise* was so far made knowen, as upon diligent search and inquiry, its neare approach might be discernable and cleare to *what or what manner of time* this did specially relate; for which both the *fall of the monarchies* and *Daniels seventy weekes* were set up as highway markes to guide mens faith herein. VI. That its simply impossible according to the *Scripture*, how the promised *Messias* could be yet to come, except the *Jewes* were put in the same state they were in at his coming, when now for these 1600. Yeares there hath been no *Scepter*, nor *lawgiver*, no *temple*, or *daily Sacrifice*. VII. That this great mystery could never possibly have entered in our thoughts, or be devised by any created understanding.

Qu. II. But are there as cleare and infallible evidences of the truth of this great

promise in the event, that surely the blessed *Messias* of the world is now come, as that it is sure he was promised.

ANSW. Its beyond all possible debate.

- I. That so *divine and wonderfull a person* was in the dayes of *Tiberius Caesar* manifested then to *Israel*, with no outward shew or observation; who did so great and marvellous things, before all the people, as were above all created power, yea, was *crucified at Jerusalem*, under *Pontius Pilate*, and is a truth in the matter of fact, that both Jewes and heathens have been enforced to confesse.
- II. That this special season of his comming into the world as the *great Epocha* and period of time from which the *Christian church*, hath since to this day reckoned her state and succession, is undoubted and clear also.
- III. That the time of his appearance unto the world, did so exactly tryft with that which was foretold by the *Prophets*, as then the *Jewish church* was with greatest advertance looking after the *Messias*; so as some remarkable *impostors* were thus excited to deceive the people herein.
- IV. That in him who was then revealed, and whom the *Christian church* worships its sure, was most exactly fulfilled, what ever was foretold, concerning the *Messias* in the Old Testament; and we do appeal herein to these *records*

cords which all the *Jewes* even to this day do acknowledge to be divine. V. That this was not done in a corner, but in the publick view of men in these dayes, most noture and famous; yea by the special destination of God at so solemn a time of the *passover in Jerusalem*, where *Christ our passover was then sacrificed*. VI. That no humane interest or policy can possibly be in this discovery of the *gospel*; when nothing more visibly crosse therto or obstructive of its successe, then such a publishing of the *death and sufferings of our Lord*, with all the ignominy and abasement which attended the same, had there been any access here to consult carnal reason, or any other ground to beare it out then the evidence and certainty of its truth. VII. That herein have all divided partyes and *sects* in the Christian world been enforced stil to meet and consent, in an acknowledgement of the substance thereof. VIII. That in the same light which was held forth in the Old Testament about the *Messias*, did the whole *gentile church* enter; and made claime to their right for being adopted the seed and children of Abraham, on these cleare and expresse promises given for the same; which the *Jewes* could not but confesse to be of divine authority.

Qu. III. What confirmation is to the

Christian faith, that for 4000. yeares the comming of the Messias should be deferred after the promise.

ANS. Though the soveraign pleasure of God should silence and satisfy our minde herein; yet is there such a sight to be had hereof, and of infinit divine wisdom shining forth in the same as should be, most *confirming* for these *ends*. I. That there might be a more distinct representing of the *glory of this mystery* to angels and men, in such a *graduall* opening up of the same. II. To put that weight and high value on his own *promise and testimony* herein, when on the alone credit thereof, he would thus both try, and beare out the *faith of his church*, for so many *ages*, and draw forth their desires and longings in all that long space of time after the same. III. To testify the greatnesse of his wrath against *sin* and the *Apostacy of mankinde*, by suffering the generality thereof to ly so long under its *fatall* effects. IV. To prepare the *church* for so *great a reception*, by all that long *preparatory service of legall institutions*, as so highly becoming the greatnesse of this *mystery*, to have so solemn and stupendious an introduction thereto. V. That thus the world might have its full tryall of the insufficiency of natural abilities, and of any improvements of humane wisdom
and

and learning, for help; after this had first been at the furthest hight both in *Greece and Rome*, before the alone Redeemer of the church came.

Q. V. IV. What can offer furthest conviction to the world of the truth of Christianity from its nature and internall excellencies; and that it is no lesse essentially good in its selfe, then evidently true.

Ans. I. That its so undeniable even to these that live at a distance, how such is the *truth of Christ* that though all visible and humane props should faill, it can subsist by its *own evidence, and authority* over mens conscience, and hath thus ever preserved its station in the worst of times. II. That as it holds forth the most exquisite *rule of perfection* to follow, so doth bring the greatest releef to the distempers of the minde, and these miseries which attend humane state here; so as a higher glory doth thus result to the *holy God*, by this *dispensation of Grace* to fallen man then if he had stood in his *primitive state*. III. That it is sure the truth and doctrine of Christ doth natively tend to fix men in a *state of light and communion with God*, and in a *state of separation* of such in their *principles, affection, and conversation* from the world. IV. That it doth more brightly shine forth in *simplicity, and truth and in its internall*
and

and vitall acts, then in any outward form or shew, yea in the way of *selfe deniall*, *meeknesse*, and *poverty of spirit*, doth such an excellency appeare, as in *its own nature*, hath as visible a difference from the proud and vindictive spirit of this world, as the *day* hath from the *night*. V. How such is *Christianity*, as by no naked *doctrinall* discovery of the same, to mens judgement, or such rules as any humane science is acquired by, can be knowen, without ane inward power and principles of a *new life*; nor can there ever be a right knowledge of *divinity*, untill it be first ingrafted in a *divine heart*; so far is this *mystery* above all humane rule, and contrivance. VI. That it is stated in the greatest opposition to any false shew or *hypocrisy*; yea, brings such inforcements therewith of candor, and truth, and of *love, tendernesse and sympathy* towards others, as all must see is not only the highest ornament and perfection of our nature, but the greatest *blessing to the world* that ever was knowen. VII. That such a native *lustre and fragrancy* doth attend the truth, and simplicity of the gospell, as its no more possible for humane *art* or cunning to represent this, then to make the dead image of a *man* to live, or to paint in a broad the *vitall scent* of a violet or rose, to our *senses*. VIII. That in this way
of

of the *gospels* subduing men to the obedience thereof, by the power of *inward grace*, the *glory of Christ* doth more eminently shine forth, then if he had appeared for this end with the greatest outward majesty and attendance of Angels to our bodily eyes. IX. That it is so visible how the whole world besides, that is without the revelation of *Christ*, is a place where horreur, falsehood, and impiety doth manifestly reign.

Qu. V. But how do yow receive so wonderfull a truth, as that of the Gospell is, when its now so great a distance of time from its first promulgation.

Ans. I. That we can be no more sure and perswaded of the most visible and present objects of sense, then, that this is the same *gospell* which is still shining forth to the world, whereby ane innumerable company of all *nations*, *tongues* and *languages*, hath received the *spirit*, and been *sealed*; yea, hath made that change upon men, in turning them from *ungodlynnesse* and *idols* to *serve the living God*, as hath been no lesse marvellous then the turning of so many *wolves*, into *lambs*. II. That it is the same *gospell* which not only through a series of 16. *centuries* hath been attested, but by such innumerable *witnesses* who counted not their life deare unto the death for sealing thereof, and found
it

it sweet to be offered up in the flames for *Christ*. III. Which in all ages past hath stood out the greatest opposition that ever the world made to any interest, while the *weapons of its warfare were spiritual, and not carnal*; & with that successe as the time of the *Churches hottest persecution* from heathens was that period of time also of a most remarkable spreading in the world. IV. That the same *Gospel* is revealed this day, which hath had such discernable *triumphs* and successe when no external assistance could be seen herein; and no visible power by which it gained the most savage and dark parts of the earth, to take on the *yoak of Christ*, and prefer the objects of faith to the most desireable *objects of sense*. V. Yea, which hath not only had such *vital influence* on mens heart, and practice to change it into the same *image*; but that herein the doctrine of the *crosse of Christ* in the greatest *simplicity* hath still been the most effectual way of its conquest, and the greatest attractive on mens souls to receive the same.

Q^U. VI. How is it demonstrable that such remarkable sufferings of times past for the truth of *Christ*, were both founded on the alone certainty thereof, and carryed out by a divine Spirit above any assistance of nature.

ANSW.

ANSW. That it is sure, I. Here was no *comedy*, or personated sufferings which the *primitive Christians*, and in after times did endure for *Christ*; or that these unexpressable torments and paines were any *dream*, and *delusion* either to themselves or the world, and that their adversaries did thus conflict and wrestle with their own *shadow* in so continued and cruel an opposition. II. That such *joy and exultation of Spirit* these witnessed amidst their *torments*, who otherwise wanted no sense or feeling of their paines and sufferings, could have no rise but what was supernatural. III. That this could be no possible dissimulation or *counterfit* when they were stepping in on *eternity*, nor the product of a distempered judgment; whilst all might see what seriousness of Spirit, *tendernesse*, and *bowels of compassion* to their adversaries they did then evidence. IV. That these greatest sufferings were upon choice, and to endure rather than to be safe at the rate of receding in any thing from the truth. V. Yea no natural reason can comprehend how such mean and feeble persons as many of these were, should endure, what would have made the greatest *natural courage* to faint, as if they had foregone humane passions which flesh and blood must needs have herein, so as I am constrained to see something
no

no less marvellous and supernatural in the
faith of martyres, then in the *faith of miracles*.

SECTION III.

Qu. I. **I**S it fully demonstrable, that the
faith of a deity, and of such an
 establishment as a religious worship, must
 necessarily determine men to be *Christians*,
 on this ground that they cannot but see how
religion hath not another being in the earth,
 but in the truth of *Christianity*.

ANSW. It is simply impossible to make a
 rational tryal herin, and not see the cer-
 tainty of this demonstration, to be thus
 clear. I. That there needs no more for
 any of a serious spirit, but to come and see,
 what the whole frame of *Heathenisme* was,
 and if it be possible to deny, even under
 any sense of the law and dictates of nature,
 its being the highest reproach of mankind;
 and how the very *mysteries* of that *Heathenish*
worship, was so horrid and impure, as they
 needed a vail then from the common view
 of the world. II. Nor can there be a ratio-
 nal reflection this day, on that strang mon-
 ster of *Mahumitanisme*, but of a visible pro-
 digy of the judgment of God, on these parts
 of the earth; upon their apostacy from the
Christian faith, by giving men up to such an
 imposture,

imposture, as exposeth the very name and form of religion, to derision; and can never claime a reception either from the purity of its rule or internal evidence of the truth therof, or of its having any possible consistence with it self. III. That its sure also the *Jewish religion* had never another being but in the truth and faith of *Christianity*, and where this foundation is divided from, it hath none at all; yea how that people unto this day are such a confirming witness to the Christian Religion, as its strang this doth not beget deeper impressions on mens spirit. So that there is an absolute necessity, we must either forgoe the use of reason, or see, if there were not such a rule given and revealed for commerce betwixt God and man, as the *Scripture*, where the laws and constitutions of the *Christian faith*, are for this end held forth, that its then sure there is no such thing, as any religion in the earth, but what wer so highly irrational and absurd, as should rather justify *Atheism*.

Q u. II. What special confirmation to *Christianity*, can this visible state of the *Jews* bear, who are in so expresse an opposition to the Gospel of Christ?

A n s w. If this were brought near our thoughts we should find it one of the great assistances to our *faith*. I. That its sure there

D

is

is such a people and race, as a living and visible evidence to our sense, of the truth of that renowned *nation, and church of Israel*, to which the *oracles of God* were committed, and thus are still, as some part of the evident ruins of that once flourishing state. II. That the world may see, such a people kept by themselves and not mixed with the nations, whose fathers from one generation to another did still own the *divinity of the Old Testament*; and doth attest that doctrine, in which the truth and substance of *Christianity* lyes, even whilst with greatest malice they oppose the Christian faith, to witnesse there can be no possible collusion here. III. Their being under a stroak of that *judicial* induration and blindness of mind, as no reason could possibly comprehend such a thing, how they see not the light in the very noon-day of the Gospel, if it were not expressly fortold their being concluded under such an arrest of judgment, until the *fulnesse of the gentiles* be brought in. IV. That so immediate an appearence of God, is in the *judgment* of that people, both in the manner and continuance thereof, as no instance could ever be found to resemble the same, since man was formed in the earth; and thus as a conspicuous monument of divin wrath, set up for every age

age and time of the Church, to turn aside and consider this great sight, and inquire what means so strang and amazing a thing, as the *state* of the *scattered Jews* is, now under the times of the Gospel. V. That this desolation on them and stroak, had such special concurring circumstances for giving light therto; as being not above 48. *years*, after the death of Christ, with their hands, as it were, hot and reaking with that *blood* which they had wished on them, and their children; that it should be at that time of the *Passover*, which was the very same of the *sufferings of our blessed Lord* there, and pointing as with the *finger* at the same; as also by the *Romans*, whose interest in their opposition to Christ they pretended to own.

Qu. III. Is the *way and manner* of the *Gospels promulgation* such, as no other profession could ever pretend to, and where all may see there can be no human interest or contrivance in the same?

ANSW. It is undeniable, that no interest else was ever in such a way promot and does exceed all natural understanding, how the truth of Christianity could in this manner prevail. I. To perswade men without any *motives*, or inducements from this present world, to imbrace a doctrine so wholly repugnant to nature; yea to prefer an interest

of things *not seen*, and which none ever in the earth saw, to the most desirable *objects of sense*. II. To admit no *implicit reception* from any, but on their exactest inquiry and tryal herein; or in an other way claime an interest in mens affections, but by a full assent of their light and judgment to the same. III. To admit no gratification to the most predominant desires and inclinations of men upon any darling sin, which according to human wisdom would be judged of an absolute necessity for gaining any acceptance with such; yea to give no partial respect to the greatest *Princes* more then to the meanest. IV. To pursue its interest, by so plain a discovery of the *death, and sufferings of our blessed Lord, with the whole ignominy thereof*, when nothing could more evidently control such an end by any rules of human wisdom and policy, if there had been a possible access to consult flesh and blood herein. V. And its sure there could be no designe, without an immediate divine power, in such a manner to plead the interest of Christianity with men, by inserting affliction, and the *croffe* in the first entry, as *essential to the profession thereof*, and holding forth the necessity of taking on the *yoke of Christ*, without which none can be his *Disciples*.

Qv. IV. But wherein doth the evidence of that great demonstration of the Gospel most clearly appear, in the *love and unity of Christians* amongst themselves, which we find Christ doth so specially presse, for this end, that the world might know, and have such a visible seal of his *divine mission*, *Joh. 17: 21.*

ANSW. The greatnesse of this demonstration may be thus evident to all. I. That its so clearly demonstrative of the *purity of our Religion*, which can admitt of no bitterness, strife, recrimination, or such indecencies of heat and passion, which are these fatal effects of discord in the Church; and thus lets us see the excellency of the *spirit and rule* of the Gospel. II. That thus also we may know the power and efficacy of the truth thereof, *which is according to godlinesse*, upon mens heart, in subduing these distempers of the mind and judgment. III. That this doth so specially tend to make religion *lovely*, and to draw forth matter of praise and blessing to God from the world, when they see such a native effect of Christianity as this, to make those who professe the same in that manner shine forth in *tendernesse, humility*, and *brotherly love*, so that they become as a publick good and blessing to mankind in the place they are in. IV. This ap-

pears also from the nature of that *union in the Church of Christ*, and amongst his followers, which only a divine power could both frame and make effectual; and its sure no human society or constitution could ever claim such an *unity* therein as this is; where not only persons of all nations and languages and of all conditions, both high and low, but of the most different interests, humours, and dividing circumstances in other things, doe yet in so marvelous an *harmony* meet in the *body of Christ which is his Church* here in the earth. V. Because herein also doth the glory and honour of our *blessed head*, more eminently appear in securing this *unity* of his Church, under a *diversity of light* and judgement otherwayes, by a spirit of love, meeknesse and condescendence amongst his people; then by imposing the most severe and absolute uniformity in all things, to be the alone condition of *Christian communion*.

Q u. V. But what strength and evidence doth this *demonstration* of the Gospel, now bear in so *divided a state* of religion, and when the wounds and breaches of the Church this day are like to blood unto death?

ANSW. Whatever just cause be of griefe, yet is there none for darkening the truth of this *demonstration*, on these grounds. I. That
none

none can deny the perfection of the *rule* of the Gospel, for the most firm and intire unity amongst all the followers of Christ on the earth. II. That no opposition which is made therto, but what hath been *fortold* as one of the greatest tryals of the Church under the *New Testament*, and the Spirit of God doth most expressly point at in these *latter times*. III. Because the furthest *opposition* thereto can be no more cause for any to stumble, or question the truth of this *demonstration*, then that there is a *Devil*, whose greatest designe hath ever been to divide and break Christians amongst themselves. IV. Because this *union*, which is chiefly *mistical and invisible*, is much greater oft, then what this way may appear to the world, and of that kind as is not interrupted by distance of place, or any want of local communion. V. That such a *guard* is set by the Lord unto this piece of his glory, and to oppose any invasion thereon; that there stands an *Angel with a flaming sword*, upon every hand in the *commands and threatenings* of the Gospel, to secure this blessed *unity* of the Saints amongst themselves, so as none can invade the same but on their highest peril, of opposing that which is as the *apple of Christs eye*. VI. That its ever found how this demonstration hath some clear evi-

dence amongst such who are indeed the *Disciples of Christ*, and according to their advance in the life and power of Christianity doth the more brightly shine forth; so that the nearer the *lines* are to the *center*, the nearer also are they amongst themselves. VII. That in all times there hath been some tremendous *marke* of the judgment of God made visible on such who are *contentious*, and have made it their worke to *cause division* in the Church and sow discord among brethren.

Q^u. VI. But what hath the Church now in these latter dayes to compense the want of that great demonstration by *miracles*, and such extraordinare confirmations of the Christian faith, as were in the first times?

ANSW. I. That we may see how far that *seal of martyrdom*, which came in the roome of *miracles* to the Church, hath exceeded that which was in the first times of the Gospel. II. That there hath been since such innumerable *shining examples of holiness*, yea these continued to this day, whom the world might see did walk in the light and power of Christianity, as sure as men walks, under the power and vertue of a living soul. III. That we now see what a length the *course* of the Gospel and of the Church

Church militant is come, and how far thus the *times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*, which once was so contrare to all human appearance. IV. That so sure and exact a *performance of the Scripture*, is now undeniable in the event, and of such great and marvelous things which were fortold under the *New Testament*, that in an ordinarie way none could have believed, what we see with our eyes, and now have these things, which were in former ages the *object of the Churches faith*, made the *object of our sense*; and its sure this is such a *seal* and confirmation to our faith in these last times as doth much exceed the greatest *miracles* which were with the *first planting of the Gospel*. V. Though we may not resolve our faith on any *extraordinaire providences*, or lay the least weight hereon to support the authority of the doctrine we professe, since this only is founded on that sacred revelation of *divine truth in the Scripture*, which is that infallible rule to discerne true miracles, and what is Gods seal herein under the undoubted signature and stampe of his own power and working in the same; yet hath there been such incontrollable evidence of *extraordinaire signs* and confirmations to confirme the truth of the Reformed Religion, since the Reformation, as in no ages past was ever known,

but with the first planting of the Gospel among the Gentiles.

SECTION IV.

Qu. I. **I**S it cleare and demonstrable that the *doctrine of Christ*, is a *soull quickening* and *experimental religion*, and the trial thereof, in its most supernatural truths, of such rational certitude and evidence, as the world can no more deny or question the same then these *experiments of nature*, that are of most universal use?

ANSW. Though men looked but at a distance here or were come from *Heathnism*, so far as to make a serious trial of *Christianity*, its sure they could not but see, and be fully perswaded in their judgement, hereof on these grounds. I. That such a discovery is undoubted and cleare in the *Scripture* of so great things, as, that there is a *holy Ghost*, and his workings on mens souls, of *peace with God*, and the *joy of his presence*, which all who receive the gospel are called to know and prove on their own trial. II. That this wittnesse of Christian *experience*, hath as discernable a consent and harmony there with as face answereth to face in the glasse, and is cleare to be no *casual thing*, but where every step in this way of *trial*, is by *Scripture*
light

light, and what they did before read there, ere they knew it on their own soul. III. That this in all ages of the *church* and wherever such as served God in the spirit were found in the most *remote parts* from others, hath still been the same; and like a *great roll* is transmit from one generation to another, with their *confirmatory seal*, that *God is faithful and true*, in these truths of his word which seem most incredible to the world, & now comes to our hand to require the same attestation and witness. IV. That these who know and testify these things once found it not easy to believe the same and did no less judge of such *great experiments of religion* as a dream or imaginary thing then most now doe, until they knew them on their soul. V. That such also have been the most *burning and shining lights* that ever were in the church and these innumerable in all ages who declare the same, yea this in the mouth of the grave and entrance to an eternal state when no outward interest could sway them here. VI. That it must be a matter of greatest assurance which hath then pressed the most tender *parents* with their last and dying breath to commend the same *trial to their children*, and to obtest their making earnest herein as the greatest interest they could leave them. VII. That what ever
differe-

differences be oft among these in some matters of truth: yet, in the certainty of this great trial of the life, power and comforts of religion, is ane *harmonious onenes* in the same testimony in all times of the church. VIII. That if any question this because so remote from mens *senses*, and the judgement of carnal reason; the reality of its *effects*, doth unanswerably prove both the *reality* and *excellency of the cause*.

Qv. II. What cleare and rational conviction can yow offer, of so great a thing as *conversion* of men from a state of nature, to a *new state by grace*, which doth raise them as far above the residue of mankind, as reason doth above the state of the beastes?

ANSW. Though I should strive against the conviction of such a *miracle*, and demonstration of the Gospel, as *conversion* is, yet were it not possible to deny such demonstrative evidences as the world cannot but see hereof. I. That it is sure such a *change* is made essentially requisite to the *being*, and constitution of a Christian, by the whole consent of the Scripture. II. That there was never yet ane *argument in nature*, for ones being a Christian in the life and power thereof what ever may be for a naked form or shew. III. That they are not a *few*, but innumerable instances in all times and of all rancks & conditions

ditions of men on whom so great a *change* and difference hath been made thus evident, both from themselves what once they were, and from the residue of the world. IV. That this hath been not only upon such as have been *signally impious* in their practise, but who in their judgment were wont to dreading holynesse as a fancy, so as *Atheists* must grant that there have been as profest *Atheists* sometimes as themselves, who have been made such conspicuous monuments of the power of the gospel. V. That none can object here, as once the *Jewes* did, doe any of the *rulers*, or such as the world counts most *wise*, and knowing stand witnesses to the same; when it is so known there have not been more *wise*, *learned*, and *judicious* in the things of reason upon the earth, then such as have been eminent examples of the power of conversion. VI. That its marvellous *effects* in subduing men, to what once was there predominant interest and idol, and to part from what had been as their *right eye*, or *hand* could only be from an immediat divine power. VII. That such as were greatest adversaries to the truth, have been made no lesse eminent *instruments* in the service of Christ, and choise vessels of honour, then once they were in their enmity and opposition. VIII. That this change hath been

been so discernable in times of most visible persecutions and hazard, when no outward advantage or gaine could have the least influence thereon. Now as these are demonstrably cleare, so can there be no possible access to question this. I. That the *Scripture* is faithfull and true in so great a discovery. II. That there is a *divine spirit* and a power above nature, which accompanyes the same in such a change. III. That there are surely, *contrary states in ane other world*, when they are so undeniably manifest here.

Qu. III. But can so great ane experiment of religion as that of *communion betwixt God and men*, here upon earth be made rationally convinceing to such as are themselves strangers thereto; and for a further confirming of the Christian faith?

ANSW. Though this be ane *experiment* of divine truth of a more transcendent interest and value then all that ever were in nature, yet is it no lesse *evident*, there can be no possible delusion herein; if I. to which so *innumerable a company* beares testimony and hath transmit the same, as that which not once or twice they have proven but in the continued trial of their life. II. That its known to the world, how such as testify what they doe, and have so oft found in the retirement of their souls with God, are of as
discer-

discerning spirits to know the true value of things, as any else; yea such whose testimony in other things the worst of men could not refuse nor deny. III. How its undeniably evident, such must know another acquaintance and *society then that of men*; that not only makes these hid exercises of godlines so desireable, where all may see they more flee then follow any humane wittnesse, but thus makes so visible a change oft both in their case and countenance after most sad anguish and dounecastings of spirit. IV. That it is so evident also how such as are most serious this way, have been visibly oft raised above their ordinary case, and frame in prayer, and other dutyes of religion; yea, in that manner, as they who never knew, there is a *holy Ghost* but by report, could not withstand so cleare conviction of the reality hereof, that can beget such *liberty, humble tendernesse* and melting of heart, yea such discernable joy and confidence. V. That no delusion or false shew can be here, when its ever seen, how such as are most serious and frequent in *prayer* and these hid retirements with God, are the most flourishing also in the *vitals* of Christianity, and have the most honorable lustre, and appearance of any in their profession. VI. That its such only whose joy and comfort is most specially
discer-

discernable beyond others when these lower springs of outward help and encouragement are most visibly shut up.

Qu. IV. Is that great, and experimental part of religion in *the power of the conscience* over man, such as may be as demonstrable to the world, as the truth of a rational being?

AnsW. It may be matter of wonder how men are not struck with deeper convictions hereon, when they cannot but see. I. That though this be the greatest *tormentor*, and troubler of the world, yet is there no possible retreat from its power tho they should flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, but doth thus enforce the soul to a *reflexion on its selfe* even when it trembleth at that sight. II. Which causeth such feare and horreur upon the commitment of *secret sins*, when no dread of humane wittnesse, or of visible hazard this way could ever occasion this. III. Which admits no violence in any to outdare the same, but is a power that the *greatest monarches* finde to be stronger then they; and is such, as these oft are enforced for a present ease, and releefe either to divert, or bribe the same by some false grounds of peace. IV. That it constraines men to *justify God*, and *judge themselves* when his hand doth pursue them, and to finde out
their

their sin, and guilt, which was before hid:

V. Which makes men also afrayed to be *alone* with themselves; and to tremble at the word of truth, because its *light doth torment them*, by that unavoidable application the conscience makes hereof. VI. Yea makes mens guilt so legible oft in their countenance, even when they study most to conceale it, as all may see, there is an accuser within whose authority and power cannot possibly be declined. VII. Which with so remarkable a *confidence*, and *security* doth support mens spirit and makes it easy to sustain its greatest infirmities from without, when it is a friend; yea, thus upholds the oppressed with unspeakable peace and comfort, when it doth oft cause the oppressours to tremble.

Q u. V. But what doth most necessarily result from so cleare a demonstration as the *conscience* is for confirming of our faith?

A n s w. I. That its infallibly thus cleare; how there is a *higher power* and *judgment*, to which all mankind is subjected, & gives the world an unavoidable demonstration, both of the being of *God*, & the *truth of his word*, in the great & supernatural discovery which it makes hereof. II. That there is a *supream* & infallible law also & invisible judge above us, under whose power and authority this *court of justice* doth without respect of persons

sons both *summond*, *arrest*, bring in *witnesse* and *sentence* great and small. III. That the *internal government* of our *blessed Lord*, this way both in the severity of his rebukes and most sensible enlargements of peace and comfort is unavoydably demonstrat. IV. That it beares so clear evidence to that unknown and undoubted *releef*; and how none else could be ever found, to these wounds and stings of the conscience, but in the *light and power of Christianity*. V. That it is simply impossible for men to delight freely in a course of sin, when no humane power can disarm the conscience of that so intollerable *a sting*, by which it begins so early a hell within the soul. VI. That such is the power and peace of a good conscience as can make it stand unbroken amidst the greatest ruines and terrours of the world when under such a guard, as it is wrapped up in its own *innocency*.

SECTION V.

Qu. I. **I**S the evidence of a *Kingdome of darknes*, in a direct opposition and contrariety, to that *Kingdome of light*, which Christ hath set up by the Gospel, such as the certainty thereof may be a matter of sense, as well as of faith?

ANSW.

ANSW. Since this is of such special use, both to confirm the christian faith and awake such to deeper reflexion on the same, with whom there seemes no accessse to deall, but by *proofes* from *palpable experience*; it is not possible to deny. I. That there is such a power, as the *devil* and these *wicked spirits* incompassing the earth, yea that have an ordinar and familiar converse with many therein. II. That these spirits though once originally excellent, have fallen into such an apostacy, as all may see their aim and only pleasure, is to *dishonour God*, and destroy his *image* in man. III. That it is impossible to deny the *marks* of that power and conquest, which the *Prince of this world*, hath every where amongst men; yea how visibly many are transformed into his image into such prodigious and desperat acts of wickednesse; as we should think humane nature could not but tremble at. IV. That none can control the certainty both of *sense* and *reason* which is in the truth of *apparitions* and *bodily possessions* of men in all ages, and in all places of the earth; and can need no demonstration for this, that in many places of the earth, the *devil* is both visibly and audibly knowen. V. That he is so manifest in his appearance as a *spirit of blasphemy*, which impetuously acts men to war against hea-

ven with their *tongue* in such oathes and cursing as hath no casual pleasure, or gain herein; yea, as a *spirit of delusion* in so visible an excitement of others to these extravagancies under a shew of religion, as are incompatible with any use of judgement or reason. VI. That so innumerable a company of humane race, hath in all ages been in a *formal*, and *expresse covenant* with these powers of darknesse is undenyable upon the most severe and impartial inquiry herein.

Qu. II. What special *assistance* to your faith doth the certainty of these *powers* of *darknesse* bring therewith?

ANSW. I. That such a party both in their nature and continued actings, are in a stated opposition to the Kingdome of Christ. II. That it is so visible the *prey* which these mighty hunters do follow is not our *body*, or the things of this life, but is with respect to ane *immortal soul*, and ane *after state*, and that thus man might be made sharer of the same misery under which they are concluded. III. That all may see their being under restraint of a supream power above them & under such *chaines* as do irresistibly bound their *rage*, and *enmity* against man by ane *invisible guard* and *hedge* which they cannot breake over. IV. How their greatest *rage*, and struggling is against the *conversion*,
of

offinners to God, and to hold fast his possession in such, as the *Spirit of God* doth not, more clearly move for their rescue, then these doe to crosse that blessed design of the Gospel. V. That there are none serious in the truth and life of religion but finde themselves pursued by such ane *adversary*; and to have as discernably another party then themselves, or the world to conflict with as if they saw them in a *visible shape*. VI. That by the *Gospel* and within the precinct of the church, is so discernably a greater *restraint of Satans dominion* and power then in all the earth besides; yea that the advantage of being within the *external covenant of Baptisme*, is so demonstrable as the least yeelding or tendency to a renouncing of the same, or any acts of *homage*, for making use of his help, hath ever made way for some more extraordinary power of the *devil* over such then others. VII. Thus also is a most undeniable confirmation given of ane *invisible world*, and of such *intellectual beings* there, as are far above man; yea that there is so undoubted ane intercourse betwixt men and spirits, as may clearly shew that interest mens soul hath in another state and world then this.

Q u. III. Is that great truth of the *immortality of the soull*, and its never dying sta-

te after death, as fully demonstrable to reason, as it is by the furthest certainty of faith?

ANSW. Though it be so amazing a thing to beleeve ane *immortal soull*, and *eternal state*, wherein it must shortly enter, as by few seemes to be apprehended, yet are its demonstrative evidences, such that except men lose all sence and use of reason, it is not possible to deny. I. That there is such ane *immaterial and active substance* as the *soull*, which can admit no cause, either of its decay or dissolution, from the body, yea that the greatest excellency of this visible creation, is here, that such a vital *beam of life, light, and immortality*, as the *soull* of man is therein. II. Though we cannot see this rare and wonderful being, yet it is here we both *see*, and *feel* it to be something *distinct from the body*, and to have a distinct interest, both in its griefs and comforts. III. How it can have no dependance on the body in its being, which doth no way depend thereon in its actings and exercise; but is oft most vigorous and cleare, in its exercise, not only when most *separat* and abstract from sensible things, but when the *flesh* is under the greatest decay, and neare its *dissolution*; to shew the *soull* lyeth not a dying with the body, but hath its *distinct subsistence*.

ce, to live in a separat state, when it dyes.
 IV. Its being peculiarly framed for converse, and intercourse with spiritual beings, yea is only of the visible creation admit to fellowship with the invisible God, and to have reflex acts upon it self. V. How it is a *being* of a higher nature and value, then the sun, moon and starrs; which not only can know, and conceive of things above the evidence and impressions of *sense*, but to make a rational choise of good, though crosse to any sensual pleasure; yea to rejoyce, and have its proper delights, when the body is afflicted and in pain; nor can be defiled from the most loathsome sores and defilements of the flesh, so as I must needs see both its dominion and preheminance over the body, and to have assuredlie a subsistence without the same. VI. That it is such a being, as is capable of a happinesse beyond the whole extent of the world, & hath these intellectual facultyes, which cannot possibly want, both objects suitable thereto, and injoyments, above the senses. VII. That the most choise and excellent, are usually most afflicted, and crushed under the feet of their oppressours, whilst these flourish in the earth and have no bands in their death, so as such were of all men the most miserable, if in this life, both their being and blessednesse

were founded. VIII. That there is so *universal a sense of immortality*, as these who both feare and hate the evidences hereof, yet under some constraint of reason hath the same for a continued terrour. IX. That it is sure the *certainty of death*, makes it simply impossible, for things only suited to this life of sense, to be the ultimate good, or fruition of man; since else the *beasts* should have a greater happinesse then such, if it were not from respect to ane after and *immortal state*.

Q U. IV. What confirmation to your faith does that great and amazing change by *death* offer, when it would seem to be something meerly *natural*?

A N S W. Though the only wise God moves herein according to the nature of second causes, and that it hath various wayes of approach unto men, yet may all see with the furthest conviction of rational evidence, as well as certainty of faith, I. How *death in its first constitution is penal*; and comes by a divine appointment unto all, not meerly as men but as sinners, and to be thus no *natural accident* and result of our primitive and original frames. II. That its *death*, as a *penalty* which keepes the feare and dread thereof so much on all living, as that last period, when the eternal state of men is then cast.

III.

III. That the *sting* and bitterneſſe of ſin, is ſo manifeſt in innumerable diſeaſes and ſtroakes of death, which many feel an 100. times ere they *dye* once, beyond other of the creatures. IV. Though the ſentence of *dying* is on all, yet ſo great a difference is betwixt the ſaints and reſidue of men here, that its *penal* execution on the ungodly, is ſuch as nature can give no ſupport herein. V. That *ſupernatural* *preſages* and warnings hereof ere it come, are in all times ſo known and ſure; yea ſuch extraordinary evidences ſometimes of the precise time, as could have no poſſible riſe from any *natural* cauſe. VI. That its immediat *commiſſion* from a ſupream and *inviſible* power, is ſo evident in ſuch executions oft, of this ſentence, by *ſword*, *famine* and *peſtilence*, as the viſible *finger of God*, in a juſt retribution unto men for ſin, may be no leſſe ſeen, and a ſupernatural *cauſality*, then the effects have been undoubted and cleare; to ſhew ſuch is the ſtate of man, as this great revolution by *death*, doth each moment depend on a call from heaven. VII. That the certainty of ſomething *ſupernatural* herein, as the King of terroures, is ſo known as no releeſe can poſſibly be found, but in the *truth and power of Chriſtianity*, to ſet men both above the feare of death and ane after ſtate, when once it comes

neere. VIII. Yea that it is surely above the possibility of nature, which can beare out in this great adventure and *trial* of mens *faith*, both in the truth and strength thereof, at *death*, for which end the Lord hath thus choised that by so strange an *entry*, and at so dark a port they should first passe to the full enjoyment of that glorious state above.

Q. V. What *evidence* and *demonstration* can yow shew, to confirm so great a faith of an *eternal glory* abiding the Saints in heaven, and of its *earnest* and *first fruits* here, as may strike an undeniable conviction hereof on the world?

A. I. By that visible *ripening* and resemblance to such a state in all the degrees of a Christians growth, to a more *full stature* of *the man in Christ*, as may be no lesse evident then the natural growth of our body. II. That though the opening of these *gates* of the *second world* be hid, as no humane sense can discern the *spirit* in its *ascent* through these higher regions, to that unconceivable *paradise* and *glory* in the *third heaven*, yet is the *triumphant entry* and passage of innumerable Christians at death, such as hath oft been, a matter of sense and clearest evidence to the world. III. That such also were both *humble*, *tender*, and *sincere* in
their

their life, and then in so great a composure of judgement, as all might see they knew what made them glade and could swallow up both the feares and bitterneffe of death; yea that this was not given for their own support only, but for a more *publick use*, to the conviction and confirming of others.

IV. That the state of glory is demonstrable and hath been oft brought downe to mens sense, by these *ravishing joyes of the Martyres of Christ*, and exultation of spirit even in the *flames*.

V. By such supernatural comforts as attend the life of Christianity, and can have no possible rise from the flesh and outward causes, with that *joy and peace*, which by so natural a result followes *well-doing*; and any service of love for Christ as all may see to be the *first fruits* of that harvest which is above.

VI. By so rare and marvellous a frame of the *new man*, set up in this lower region of grace, in so discernable a conformity to the blessed God, and resemblance to another state then here, to which the world is but as a place of pilgrimage, trial and a *preparatory state* only.

VII. By such visible returns of joy and comfort of Christians after saddest conflicts and downecastings, and day-break of these *vital quickning beames of divine light*, that have been no lesse evident oft, then that of

the

the *martyrs* at the stake, who cryed out; *Now he is come, he is come.* VIII. By these *breathings of love* after ane unseen Christ and visible effects of its power on men, as might shew some begun *translation* of the soull so far herein, as to be more where it loves then it lives. IX. Though we cannot see here, that *ineffable glory*, which is above, but should have our *faith* instead of *eyes*; yet such is the truth of *holinesse*, as doth not only evidence, but in its own nature partake of a *future glory*; so as every degree and act thereof doth enter in a begun state of *fruition* and blessednesse, and makes it simply impossible for a *good man* in any true exercise of godliness, *not to be happy also*, and thus in a more near capacity to know that *joy unspeakable*, and *full of glory*, which is above. X. By so sure, known, and tryed a passage betwixt heaven and mens souls in *prayer*, with so settled a trade of *commerce* this way, and certain returns, as with assurance such can say, though they must *change their place*, yet not their *company*. XI. That the whole dispensations of providence in *Israels passage* through the *wildernesse*, and to so excellent a country as *Canaan*, is no lesse sure in it self, then that it was given for an embleme and *type* of the jurnying and militant state of the saints here-
and,

and to be a solemne pledge of that *Canaan above*. XII. That such is the magnificence, harmony, and order of these visible *heavens*, and *celestial bodies* there, with their different *degrees of glory*, (though all illuminated from the same fountain of light the sun) as we may judge by a *divine ordination* have some peculiar respect to that end, to awake & raise our thoughts thus, to these *higher regions of glory*, which are above all these, by what is thus visible to our eyes; where the redeemed of the Lord shall be ever fixed, & *shine forth as the Sun in the kingdome of their Father*.

Q^U. VI. What visible and awakning *evidences* are there of the truth of an *Hell*, and that state of *horror* and *torment* in another world, which even to mens *senses* here, might present the certainty thereof?

A^NS^W. I. That it can be no more sure, there is such a power and party as that of the *Devils*, then the reality of some such *horrid region* and place also, to which they belong, and are adjudged to. II. From so innumerable a company of *human race*, as are not only in the visible service of these *infernal spirits*, but partakers of the same nature and *enmity* against the *H. God* and his *image*, as doth clearly witnesse their respect and tendency to the same *state* and *place*, and to be confederate in their *judgement*, as they were
here

here in their *sin*. III. From such visible impressions of *vindictive justice* on mens souls, with such *horror of conscience* and unsufferable torments this way, as in all ages have been known by most remarkable instances, when not in the least distemper of their natural reason, that may present to mens *senses* something of a *visible Hell*, as convincingly, as if one had *risen from the dead*, for the same. IV. From such a trembling *sense*, and *terror of divine vengeance*, as oft follows upon *horrid acts of wickedness* and most eminently then breaks forth upon a surprising sight of *death*, as all may see something more dreadful herein then the dissolution of nature and the power and present arrest of a *future judgment* made visible in the same. V. From such begun degrees, as that of *blaspheming and rage against God*, because of his *plagues*, with these *prodigies of cruelty* exerced by men here in the earth, as might be evident to all to be more then human, and rather the effects of infernal spirits acting in a human shape. VI. From so clear a *prelude* of the same in that judicial *obduration*, and blindnesse, so many are given up to under the greatest discoveries of light, so as all may see their being thus bound over in *chains*, and shut up in *prison*, until *death* bring them forth to the

execution; and how no relief or application of the means of grace hath then any more access. VII. From such a map & shadow of *eternal vengeance*, in these terrible acts of divine judgment inflicted here on *Apostates*, and *persecuters* of the *truth*, and other flagitious persons which with the very first view might present an awful and immediat appearance of God in the same, and that some *strang* and supernatural *punishment* is oft visible on the *workers of iniquity*. VIII. And what ever be of natural causes in such visible representations here in the earth, as that *sulphureous lake* where once *Sodom* was, and these burning mountains such as *Hæcla*, *Etna*, and *Vesuvius*, yet we may truly judge their being thus set before the world as some visible memorials of these *infernal flames*; and as it were so many *lumeheads* thereof, for such who will not believe the same, because they do not yet see or feel such a thing.

Q^U. VII. What *assistances* hath our *faith*, of that great and wonderful truth of the *resurrection of the body*, after its dissolution in the *grave unto dust*?

ANSW. I. From that visible and stupendious frame of the *heavens* and the *earth*, when its sure that the same *infinite power*, that hath not only made man, but the whole creation, can as easily collect and recount the

the dispersed *ashes* of the *body*, as *form the same*. II. From that greatest pledge hereof, in the *resurrection of the body of Christ*. III. From that tribulation and sore pain, that the saints here in their outward man are exposed to, since it is sure that in the holy justice of God, he did not give such *bodies* for *labour*, and for *toyl*, and to his *martyrs*, to endure unexpressible torments for Christ, to perish for ever. IV. From these visible *resemblances* and *prefigurations* of the *resurrection* which the Lord hath given to confirme our faith herein, in the ordinarie course and *productions of nature*; so as all may see how every *night* is as the *grave* of the *day-light*, and each morning a new *resurrection* of the same; and how visible an image of *death* is in each season of the *winter*, with so marvelous and beatiful a *resurrection* of the earth, on every return of the spring, in the *herbs*, *flowers and plants*, taking life and rising again, in the *leaves*, *blossomes and fruites*; yea this in such a variety, as may no lesse convincingly evidence an infinite divine power herein, then that the same body of man should be raised at the *last day*. V. From that continued *miracle* of the *harvest*, after the *seed-time*, with so amazing a production of the *grain sown* in the earth, and its first dying there before it be quickned,

so

so as to be at last brought to 30, 60, yea sometimes an *hundred fold*, out of the very same grain; which to these who had never before known the same would seem incredible, & above all reason to conceive, or bear credite therto.

CHAPTER III.

The confirming worke of Religion, improved wick respect to the times, to clear the way of the Lord herein, before this generation, and let us see how nothing is so strang in the events of this day, which should not more strenten, then shake, and that the God of the Reformed Church doth still own the same interest, according to his faithfulness: which is here briefly pointed at, upon some special inquiry, proposed about the same.

SECTION I.

Qu. **W**Hat can afford both *light*, and *confirmation to our faith*, in such a time, when we see the *worke of the Lord*, about his Church, to be most remarkably now a *worke of judgement*, with such dark and searching tryals therewith, as former times have not known.

F

ANSW.

ANSW. It is sure, we have seen nothing; but what might have been too evidently looked for, and that we can pretend no want of *light* herein, upon these grounds. I. That the *Trialls* of a Church, should be suited to the measure of their *talent of light*, & when this hath been in some more then ordinarie way dispensed, that some remarkably *searching times* might be expected to follow; nor can it be now strang to us, that such things fall in with this *day*, which did not meet the *Churches of Christ* at the *first entry of the Reformation*, who then had not so clear discoveries of the truth, and that measure of *confirmation* therein, which hath been since. I I. That some unusual *tryals*, and *conflicts*, in the Lords usuall method of providence, should be suited also, to the greatnesse of that *worke*, which he is bringing forth, may be no strang thing; and to see a time of such sore wrestlings as this, when all things seem to cry, *be in pain* as *Micah* 4: 20. Yea when some great *event* of the Scripture is to be revealed to the world, and near to its *full hight*, and *period of accomplishment*, as we have safe ground for assurance of this day. I I I. Nor hath this sad and dismal hower on the Church, been more obvious then the *provoking cause* hereof, in which the *holy righteousnesse of God*, may be no

no lesse clear then the *cloud* now is dark; when such a visible falling of hath been from that *love*, *tendernes*, and *power of religion* that did formerly attend its profession; as for these many years past we might have seen that some sore and remarkable judgment was coming, and that if we had not been in such a maner undone, we were, under some sadder strock of spiritual judgment, ready to be undone. IV. Yea it hath been too visible, that such *evils* followed the *Reformed Churches*, as in no time it was ever known, that the holy God, did passe such by, without some signal evidence of his *wrath* against the same before the world. V. We know that *carnal confidence* hath a *curse* ever waiting upon it in the *Scripture*, which none can take of, or make that thrive which God hath himself cursed; and it is too visible how far we have gone thus out of the way of our strenth, by such eager seeking *human props*, & support, as we have forgot the *guide of our youth*, and *covenant of our God*, and what great things he hath formerly done in the greatest straits of his Church, when there was much humble *trusting*, with little sence; as though the *spirit of the Lord*, had not done more to recover his truth, then all human might or power, ever could doe.

SECTION II.

Q. **W**Hat talent, are we still accountable for to support our faith against the greatest *fears* of this time, from these *immediate appearances of God*, and of the *glory of his power*, for the same *truth and cause* of the *Reformed Church*, we are now called to contend for, which hath been since the reformation when so strong & unusual a tyde, now is against the same?

A. N. S. W. If men shut not their eyes, and *hide this great talent of the workes of God, under the ground*, its sure none can question such a *seal*, which before the sun, to the amazement and conviction of the world, hath been put to the truth of the *Reformed Religion*; that we are now sifted under such a *call*, as the Church of *Israel* was, *Deut. 4: 34.* to *ask of the times, that are past*, since *Israels* coming out of *Egypt*, and since the first planting of the *Gentil Church*, by the *Gospel*, *whither there hath been so great a thing as this in the earth, that God hath essayed to take to himself a people from the midst of other nations, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrours, according to all that the Lord our God hath done*

done for the rescue of his people, in these *last times*, from *Antichristian* bondage and darkness; and settling them in a church state; but *unto us was this shewed*, that we might know, that the Lord he is God, and there is none else beside him: yea are still called to see; and be as *eye witnesses* to these things; I. How bright a day of the Gospel of Christ, did goe before this great *darknesse* on the Church, and what a solemne *triumph* in these late ages the *truth* hath had over *Antichrist*, so as the *full strock* and ruine of his kingdome, which is sure and established in the *promise of God*, seems not now more marvelous and above human appearence, then what *we have seen*, in the begun degrees of its accomplishment. I I. In how few years also, there was, as a *new Christian world* brought forth, in that swift course and progresse which the ingathering of the Reformed Churches had, so as between the year 1621, and 1560. such famous *plantations* of the Gospel, were settled in a Church state; which all may see was the immediate worke and power of God; to shew that none should fear, or *stagger at his promise*, though the waters yet swell, and come to the *flowings of Jordan*, and difficulties appear unsuperable to human sense, after this great things which the Lord hath done. III. How extraordinary a *calling*, and

excitment of *instruments*, was then evident, for the service of that time, and *reapers* thus eminently prepared for so great an *harvest* of the Gospel, as might put the world to inquire whence these were, in so numerous a concurrence, when a few of such a spirit, were so rarely to be found in many ages before.

IV. Yea such an accession also, of *spiritual gifts*, and induments then for *building* of the Church, as had not been formerly known, since the first coming of the Gospel to the *Gentils*; wherein it may be said, the *glory* of these *last times* hath even in some degree exceeded that of the *first*. V. And can the most dismal things of this time, countervail the *confirmations of our faith*, who have so clearly seen, with the first breaking up of the *pur doctrine of Christ*, the *power and life of Christianity* came therewith to the world, as a *seal*, and attestation therto, beyond any *miracles*; yea how innumerable a company, in these last ages of different tongues and languages, and these so remot from one another, did not only receive the same truth, but with such resolution adventure their souls thereon, as might fully witnesse, they had another prospect of *Christianity*, and to be in some other manner ravished with the *glory & beauty* of the same, then is now in these times. VI. That such high *spring ty-*
des

des of the *power*, and *efficacy* of the Gospel, might be evident to all, after so sad a restraint had been for so many ages before, under *Antichristian* darknesse; for whatever was then as a *private seall*, on the spirit of Christians whilst the witnesses did *prophecy in sack-cloth*, yet was there no such evidence and *demonstration of the H. Ghost*, or a *publick confirmatory seal* to the truth, as was after the *Reformation*. VII. Yea was it not the most sober, serious, and inquisitive part of men, upon a sure tryal of the grounds of their faith, who did most firmly imbrace the same; and how many of these also were of the greatest parts and abilities, whom none could judge to adventure so far herein, without the highest assurances, that this was their undoubted interest and upmaking. VIII. We have seen not only these of mean and low estate, but such of the *highest* place and *quality*, most chearfully adventuring whatever interest could be dearest to them, in the earth for the truths sake; yea was ever found, how such as were most acquaint, with the reformed religion in its power, and living up in their practise, to what they profess thereof, were these who with the greatest assurance, have most resolutely still adhered thereto. IX. We have seen also, its most remarkable spreading in the world,

when there could be no possible pretence of a *lucrative interest*, or external motives for the same. X. We have seen something not only extraordinary, but even *miraculous* in the joy, and *resolution* of innumerable *martyrs* since the *Reformation* who did bear out with a more then human strength, against a cruelty so visibly *inhuman*, and savage; yea which did in some degrees exceed that measure of the *Heathens*, in the *Primitive times*, as being against a greater light then theirs. II. And have we not seen of what spirit, such still have been since the *Reformation*, who were the most notour instruments in the Churches persecution, and how visibly such did act herein, under so impetuous an incitement of the *Devil*, that as *Tertullien*, in his *Apollogy* speaks of *Nero*, the truth might boast in having such adversaries. XII. It is sure we have seen, how no human power, could yet ever undoe this blessed interest of the *Reformed religion*, tho no way, or change of weapons, hath been left untryed; but we have thus seen, whither so strong, and unite a confederacy, as the *Catholick league* in *France* did at last resolve, and, not only in the ruine of the greatest actors and contrivers therein, but to a further establishing of the *Reformed Church* there, as though such had intentionally acted for the same; when
if

if *second causes* had brought forth their ordinary effects, it might have been judged impossible to fail. XIII. We have seen that issue of the whole counsels, expense and cruelty of *Philip the II. of Spain*, to bear down the truth of the Gospel in the *Netherlands*, which was to the furthest settling of this *illustrious state* and the *Church of Christ* there; yea how their conspicuous rise and flourishing even in the externals, and their resolute adherence to the truth of Christ did most visibly keep together. XIV. We know that *deluge of blood*, which so quickly followed the *French massacre*; and the most dismal time which ever that *nation* know, did then visibly contemporate, with such a time of their greatest rage and persecution against the truth, and that event of the *third vial* most clearly fulfilled herein, *Revel. 16: 5, 6. Thou art righteous, o Lord, which art, and was, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus, for they have shed the blood of thy saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink in great measure.* XV. Yea have we not seen how *four Kings of France* successively were in lesse then 30. years, taken away, in the same continued pursuit, how to destroy the Church there, in whom that whole race of the *Valois* was thus extinct; yea in the manner of their

F 5 death,

death, were most remarkable monuments of divine judgement, as the most famous writers of that time does attest. XVI. We have seen what marvelous effects did follow these bloody years of *Queen Mary's reign* in England, to promot and commend the Protestant doctrine to mens consciences there, with so great a triumph it had in the sufferings of such choise and excellent witnesses for Christ, as hath brought in more rent to the praise and glory of their blessed head, then may to the furthest compensate all that blood of the Saints there, though highly *precious in the eyes of the Lord*. XVII. We have seen likewyses the blood and cruelty, of late against the Protestants in *Bohemia*, in a short time most observably returned on the authors thereof, and how the immediate finger of God might be seen in calling forth the *Swedes* to avenge the same, and in that desolating strock which followed on *Germany*. XVIII. We have seen in these late times the issue of that horrid *massacre* on the *Protestants in Ireland*, to the utter ruine in a very few years after, of that barbarous party, who had thus acted herein. XIX. We have seen what wonderful providences did attend the actings of that poor handful of *Protestants in the Valleys of Piemont* since the *Reformation*, upon the account of that bloody

bloody *massacre* which was set on foot there against them, which was so astonishing as all might see an extraordinary appearance of the Lord herein, as is clearly attested by the most faithful Histories of that time. XX. And can it be forgot unto this day, how visibly a divine hand did appear in breaking that great *Spanish Armado*, in the year 1588. which had been for some years in contriving against *England*. XXI. As it was astonishing, and specially demonstrative of the immediate power and presence of God, it should be matter of wonder and praise also for after ages, that solemn time of the *Reformation of the Church in Scotland*, for planting the *reformed Religion* there; with that zeal and onnesse of spirit, as did then appear in all ranks to imbrace and adhere to the profession thereof, amidst the greatest threatnings of their adversaries; so as a *few years* did bring forth that, which would have seemed strang for an *age* to accomplish; yea that we find betwixt the last *Martyr* for the truth there, who was *burnt* at *St. Andrews* 1558. and the establishment of the *Protestant Religion*, and full abolishment of *Popery*, with the full concurrence of *civil authority* herein, in *July* 1560. was but little above two years; to shew what great things the Lord can doe, above all human counsel or
con-

confidence. XXII. Its sure we have seen in what remarkable degrees these *last vials* of the holy judgment of God, hath taken place on the Kingdome of *Antichrist*, and how conspicuous the *event* hath been of that *prophecy*, 2 *Thessal.* 2: 8. in these great effects and consumption thereof by the ministry of the Gospel, as an assured pledge of the full accomplishment of what remains herein. XXIII. And as every step of the Churches rise, hath been still advanced in a continued conflict betwixt the *truth* and *Antichrist*, so have we still seen, when the assault and opposition hath been greatest, its most remarkable tendancy to a greater victory; which were it rightly considered upon clear and solid grounds from the Scripture, the most formidable appearances of trouble from this adversary should with more comfort then fear this day be looked on; so that whatever be the nearest and most immediate events, yet is it sure, as *the Lord is true*, whose word is passed hereon, that whosoever gives their power and strength to support that interest of *Antichrist* shall lose the day and find their cause desperate, for the party with whom they contend herein is the Son of God, against whom no human power shall ever be able to stand. These are but a *few*, which are here mentioned,

tioned, of the great *acts of our God*, in behalf of his Truth, to be still as present in our sight, in a time when the spirits of many are ready to stagger and faint; and here mentioned, to lay no stresse or weight of the *authority* of the truth and doctrine of our profession thereon, but on the alone *revelation of the Scripture*; but that they are such an undeniable seal for confirming our faith, and of so known, *publick and famous evidence*, as should be no lesse considered and taken to heart now, then in the time when the Lord thus appeared herein.

SECTION III.

Qu. **W**Hat *present judgment* are we called to have of this *time*, upon clear and assured grounds from the *Scripture*; that we may know under what *aspect* thereof, the present *state of Religion* and of the *reformed Churches* is under, when so great a *crisis* is this day, as would seem to be in the very *ἀκμῇ* of its conflict, whither as to life or death?

ANSW. It is no present appearances of the time must direct our faith, nor should we either streath our fears or expectations of things and *events*, beyond what the God of truth doth warrand in his word, but its
clear,

clear, if we credite the same, and admitt the *divinity of the New Testament*, there is no just cause of hesitation or darknesse as to what the Lord is bringing forth for his Church now in these latter dayes; nor can there be any pretence, to seek an other *light*, either from the *stars* above, or the *diviners* of this time, when so woful a trade hath got up in the world, that men will thus goe to the *God of Ekron*, as though there were not a *God in Israel*, or such a thing, as his *written Oracles* to inquire at, when its sure thesely open, and with a clear and distinct sound speaks to all who have a serious and unprejudged spirit. I. That the *Church* under the *New Testament* hath now passed and gone through that most dismal and continued *tryal* herein, which was to goe over her head under *Antichrists* reigne and hight; and whatever appearence he now hath in great wrath, yet is it sure and evident that the *winter is past* and the *Churches spring* begun; and a few steps further of that judgment which is now hastning on, will at lenth end the quarrel; so that by a near converse with the word, we may clearly see from what *point* the *Churches course* and motion this day lyes, and how exactly it keeps, in the certainty thereof, by that clear *conduct* of the *Scriptures of truth*, where a full *map* of her whole
course

course and passage through time is clearly shewed. II. That we may now with some clear evidence judge, and have our faith perswaded hereof, that the *Churches* interest is upon the *rising hand*, and on a present advance, though nothing would seem more contradictory then all visible grounds now are; since this cannot fail, *John. 3: 30.* that *Iesus Christ* in his kingdom in the earth *must increase*; yea that the Scripture so clearly points forth *Antichrists* ruine and progresse of his fall and douncasting, with resemblance to that great judgment on *Pharaoh* as an evident *type* hereof; in the same judicial strokes of *induration*, on both, and *gradual* progresse herein by one *plague* after another, until the last and greatest assault, as was then at the *Red-sea*, hath the same effect for a more glorious appeareance of God, in the greatest step of judgment, and victory over this adversary, when not only the *song of Moses* but of the *Lamb* also shall be then sung, *Rev. 15: 3.* as importing something more glorious and a greater brightnesse to be put on this *illustrious act of divine judgment*, reserved to these last times, when a more *immediate appeareance of the Lord* will be seen, then in any former deliveries of his Church. III. It is no conjectural thing, but what by a clear Scripture conduct we may see, that this

time

time of the *Church* now under so notable a *Crisis* in her case, is evidently falling under that remarkable assault and conflict, with that adversary, before the accomplishing of that *vial* on his seat and throne, as we may see *Revel. 17: 13, 14.* that when so conspicuous a step of the *Churches* victory is near; the opposition thereto also will be in some higher degree proportionable to the same, when the great men of the earth, and such who shall receive power as Kings, one hower with the beast, shall have one mind and give their power and strength thereto, and shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, &c. Nor is it found through the *Scripture* where any great thing, the Lord hath done for his Church, but some unusual darknesse, and sore wrestlings hath still gone before, and should be no matter of staggering to our faith, whatever be of present fears, to see so dismal a time of tryal as now is, and amazing hight of trouble beyond what former times have known, when one of the greatest events of providence in behalf of the Church, since the revealing of *Christ* to the world, until his second coming, is assuredly near in the fall and overthrow of the man of sin. IV. We have clear ground also to judge, that so great an eclipse as seems almost

almost universally over the state of the Reformed Churches, is no going down of the sun thereon, whatever did befall the most famous eastern Churches to an utter dissipation thereof; if these different *periodes* of time be justly considered, how their *sun-set* did then fall in with the *entry* of that great *Apostacy* of the Christian Church and with that long and dismal night of *Antichrists* reign; whilst now this hower of tryal on the Churches, doth meet in that blessed *period* of *Antichrists* begun fall, and of a growing light of the Gospel, and when the *Scripture* so clearly warrands our faith herein, that the worke of providence is to *plant*, and not *cutt* of, but to bring forward that interest of the *Reformed Churches*, in the founding of which the *Mediator* hath so eminently appeared in the glory of his power in these *last times*. V. It is sure me now live in the evening, and extremity of time, when the motions of providence may be expected to be more quick and speady, as being so near the center, and to the last *Epoche*, and period of all *prophetick Chronology*; wherein the glory of God in his truth and faithfulness shall most eminently shine forth, and these *Scripture* truths which were formerly dark & abstruse, with that evidence shine forth in the event, as shall cause men to wonder at their former

thoughts and stumblings thereat. And here I must say, that there is such a sight now in the earth, as the *Romish Church*, in its complex frame and state, in so different a mould cast from any power or jurisdiction else, and such a compound of a *civil, and Spiritual Monarchy* in one and the same person, is so solemn and undenyable a *seal* to the *Christian faith*, and *divinity of the New Testament*; that its strang why this is not improved more, against the *Atheism* of this time, that such a visible event of the Scripture is now in being, which was so clearly foretold by the *Holy Ghost* 1500. years ago, with its proper circumstances, as to the manner of that *Antichristian state*, with its *rise, growth, & duration*, as is to admiration still evident to the world, when not the least shaddow or appearence of so strang future emergencies was to be seen or could have entered in mens thoughts; to shew it only could be revealed to the Church by him, to whom all his works are known from the beginning. This I have looked on, as such a *confirmation* to the truth of Christianity, that no miracles in the first times of the Church could have more evidence for the same; yea if such a party were not in being, both what it now is and in former ages hath been, it might in another manner stagger the faith of the Saints,

Saints , to a questioning the truth of the Scripture , then its most formidable appearance this day can doe. VI. I shall but add here , that we know and are sure the Lord hath reserved his greatest works to these latter dayes , wherein his judgments shall be manifest ; and that one of the most eminent manifestations of his glory before the close of time shal be conspicuous in the *fall of Antichrist* , on whose ruines that *glorious house* which Christ is yet to have for himself both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, shall be prepared and built up ; and though this great *eclipse of Antichristian darknesse* , should yet more prevail , even over the visible profession of the truth in the *Churches of Britain* , and *Ireland* , there is no cause to be staggered in the faith of *Romes fatal period* , being near , but to look hereon according to the Scripture as the *Ultimus Conatus* of that wounded adversary , which will be found in the issue to have the most immediate connexion with his greatest downfall , and the *reviving glory* of the *Church* ; *for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

SECTION IV.

Qu. **W**Hat is specially called for , in this day , of such as are accountable

table for so great a talent of light, and confirmations to our faith?

ANSW. If this were suitably taken to heart, we could not but reckon our selves under the greatest excitment and *call*, to such an improvment hereof.

I. That we account it not enough to have a *faith*, for quieting our own spirits, but how to *confirm* others, by *putting to our seal that God is true*, in the great assurances of his word, and to *sanctify him before the world*, which is so important a duty, as the Lord was wroth even with a *Moses*, and *Aaron* for one short-coming, when he called for the same, *Numb. 20: 12.* and its sure in no time was such a special trust more reposed thereon, then in this age, both as a publick debt on the Church, & personal on each Christian, how to witnesse for the Lord, upon that great interest of his faithfulness and for transmitting the same, to the ages to come, by a confirmatory seal, and testimony thereto.

II. To reckon our selves also under some more then ordinarie *call* this day, each in their present capacity and station, how to appear for the *credite* of the truth, and *stemm* so visible and impetuous a *tyde*, as is now running of *distruct*, and of a discreditable *faint*; for it may be said, never was the *Church* under

der the *New Testament* so remarkably sifted under such a trial, as that wherein the Lord did prove the *Church of Israel*; *Numb. 14.* or had a more evident relemblance therto, in the same circumstances as in this day, if they were seriously pondered; as I how in the same manner, such a false & *evil report* is too visibly raised upon the blest ways of the Lord, to discourage and faint the spirits of his people, as was then by the *spyes*, that there were insuperable difficulties in the way of the promise, by reason of the *Anakims*, and of their *walled cities*, and did thus oppose the credite of *sense*, to all these *assurances which God had given to their faith.* II. That this highly dishonourable faint and *distrust* did so sease on that people, as was like to resolve in a visible revolt, and to cry for a leader to goe back to *Egypt* again; which amongst too many in this time may be justly feared. III. That this was after such extraordinary confirmations which the Lord had given to the faith of his *Church* then, who had by his own immediate and outstretched hand so latly brought them out of the *house of bondage*, and from the *iron furnace in Egypt*, as rendered their misbelieve to be a guilt under such aggravations, as the holy God did in that manner plead, *vers. 22. These ten times have they tempted me, who have seen my glory, and*

my miracles, which I did in the wilderness,
 &c. I V. But herein we hope, and are confidently sure of a blessed *disparity* in this resemblance, as to the *numberousnesse* of such, who shall be found of the *Reformed Churches*, to act something of that part, which these *heroick witnesses* a *Caleb* & *Joshua* did & were then put to stand alone therein, who through grat shall yet appear with some measure of that spirit, and withstand so high a tyde of fears, discouragment and misbelieve as is this day, and thus to plead against the same as these did, *Num.* 14: 9. if the Lord delight in us, then let us not rebel against him, neither fear the greatest difficulties can be in the way &c. V. And is not the same precedent of providence, of so singulara respect as the Lord did then testify to his *Caleb* and *Joshua* (who were of *another spirit* in following him fully, in that day) a continued assurance, for all who shall be helped to any honourable appearance of this kind, by making them see, and inherit the truth of his promise; yea that such a residue who outlives this great and amazing storme shal have something of that testimony to bear also which *Caleb* gave *Josh.* 14: 8, 10.

My brethren which went up with me made the heart of the people faint, but I fully followed the Lord my God, and now behold the Lord hath kepted me alive, &c. o blessed they whose souls

souls are raised with that holy zeal for the truth to stand up in this great breach, by a resolute profession of their faith, and witness to the faithfulness of God, as such great and extraordinary confirmations, given thereto, now calls for.

III. It is one of the special duties of this day we stand also accountable for, how to stemm this high and growing *tyde of prejudice, and reproach* against the *Reformed Religion* which in some unusual way is now aloft; and by manifestation of the truth to gain some more awfull regard herof on mens conscience, that they may see something of the *glory of our profession*, and in what maner it maintains its conquest as no way else can possibly claim; I. Which reckons none else to be the true and genuine professours hereof, who imbrace not the same upon *evidence*, and with respect to its *intrinsic excellency* and worth; nor does judge the interest of religion to goe by *number, and poll*, where this is wanting; but to pursue that end to have men ingadged *first to be Christians*, that they may be true and sincere *Protestants*; and therfor can admitt no such methods of any base compliance with the humour and interests of men, which its principles will not bear. II. Which in its course is ever *regulare* and certain, according to that rule

of an *unchangeable and eternal truth*, without dependance on the will of man herein, or any mutable revolutions of the time. III. Which doth with the greatest lustre shine forth in the brightest *light*, and is maintained by the *clearest knowledge*; yea by the furthest plainesse, and opennesse of heart, towards all, commends it self; so that the world may see, it espouseth not mens *affection*, before it gain on their *conscience*; and to have their judgment fixed on a judicious tryal, before their resolution; nor accounts the truth of religion, can ever subsist by an *external shew* and profession, without is known *evidence* and the *efficacy* therof on mens soul. IV. Which sincerely follows the *Catholick interest of Christianitie* and publick good of mankind, in promotting the great *ends of the Gospel*, so as the world may see its highest intent is to exalt all *divine institutions*, and advance the *simplicity*, and spirituality of *Gospel administrations*, (according to the revealed *rule*) amongst men, as that which doth most nearly concern the *vitals of religion* and ane *inward life* of communion with God. V. Which pleads an impartial tryal of al its adversaries, whither the principles of our *profession* or of *Popery*, gives the greatest security to *Civil Government*, & founds the strongest obligations to *Magistracy* and

to

to all *Civil*, and *Moral duties*, by which the awe and venerable esteem of religion is kept up in a nation. It is high time that men should cease to be implicit upon this greatest interest they have within time, which is the truth of their profession in the matter of religion, when a deceit or mistake here is of an eternal concern: upon which account without respect to interest, party, or education, I have this day sought to know the truth, and what adversaries could possibly pretend, to *reproach*, or prejudice any at the *Reformed Religion*, which can only amount, to charge mens corruption and offences in their practise, upon the *rule* and *principles* of their *profession*, that can never give the least *latitude*, or connivance therto, but is *clear as the sun*; when on the other hand I could know no other way, to embrace such a profession, as *Popery*, but by turning *Atheist*, in the *first place*, and quite both *religion* and *reason* at once: but may say, in a resolute adherence to the doctrine of the *Reformed Church*, I fear not to adventure my soul, and enter in to an eternal state.

The

The CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The primitive confirmation, held forth and cleared in seven Positions.

- POSIT. I.** That sad aspect, which the implicit and traditional profession of this day hath upon the present state of religion. Pag. 1
- POSIT. II.** The greatnesse of that service for the Church to have a clear founding of the faith of assent, upon known and solid grounds herein, more universally promott. 3
- POSIT. III.** The true primitive confirmation as it was in the times of the Apostles, hold forth and cleared from the Scripture. 6
- POSIT. IV.** The continued necessity therof, no lesse convincing now, for the Churches use, then in these Primitive times. 9
- POSIT. V.** That such a confirmatory worke respects not only the more knowing and inquisitive part of men, but the meanest within the Church. 11
- POSIT. VI.** VVhat is specially called for in the practica'll use of this primitive confirmation, held forth in some serious propoals for this end. 14
- POSIT. VII.** VVhat special excitment we are under, for promotting the same in so remarkable a period of time as this, and from that hope of a greater reviving yet of such a Catholick spirit, to advance the highest ends of religion amongst men. 19

CHAPTER II.

For giving some clear view, of these primary evidences and demonstrations of our faith, that the meanest Christian should know, and vvith the least expence of time may improve for their daily use, on these greatest principles.

SECTION I.

- I.** Of the glorious being of God, which is the first foundation of all religion. 22
- II.** Of the original of the world, and its not being eternal. 25
- III.** Of a supreme providence in the conservation and goverment of the world. 26
- IV.** Of that special providence, which in its continued administration about human affaires, doth unchangably difference betwixt the righteous and the wicked. 29
- V.** How such a wonderful record as that of an immediat revelation of God unto men, is so demonstrably extant in the world. 31
- VI.** Of these special evidences of the Scriptures divinity, which men must needs see to be infallible. 33
- VII.** Of the secure convoyance of the Scripture through all the changes of times past. 35

VIII.

VIII. Of the fall of man and entry of sin into the world, as it is fully demonstrable to reason, as well as by the certainty of faith. 37

S E C T I O N I I.

- I. Holding forth these great assistances to the Christian faith, and of the Messias being surely promised to the Church before his coming. 38
- II. Of the truth and accomplishment of this great promise of the Messias, and how it is now as sure in the event as its clear he was promised. 39
- III. Of that special advantage for confirmation of our faith herein, that for 4000. years the promised coming of the Messias was deferred. 41 42
- IV. Of the nature and internal excellency of Christianity, to bear furthest evidence to the truth thereof. 43
- V. That this is the same Gospel we now receive and enjoy, which from the first promulgation thereof hath had so great effects on the world. 45
- VI. That the sufferings of the saints in times past was so demonstrably above the assistance of nature. 46

S E C T I O N I I I.

- I. For holding forth on what grounds the faith of a deity must determine men to be Christians. 48
- II. What confirmations the Christian Religion hath from that visible state of the Jews. 49
- III. That way and manner of its prevailing on the world, as no profession else could ever pretend to. 51
- IV. The nature of that great evidence, which Christ hath himself given to the world of his divine mission in the love and unity of his people, Joh. 17: 21. 53
- V. How the strength of such a demonstration stands still clear and evident in these dividing times of the Church. 54
- VI. What in these last times is under our hand to compensate such a confirmation by miracles, which was in the first times of the Gospel. 56

S E C T I O N I V.

- I. For holding forth with the furthest rational certainty, and evidence the truth and doctrine of Christ, to be a soul-quickning and experimental religion. 58
- II. The truth also of conversion of men from a state of nature to a new state of grace. 60
- III. Of so great an experiment of religion as Communion betwixt God and men here in the earth. 62
- IV. Of so great a demonstration of religion in the power and workings of the Conscience. 64
- V. Of that special confirmation to our faith, which doth result from such a demonstration of this power of the Conscience over men. 65

S E G -

S E C T I O N V.

- I. For holding forth the truth of a Kingdom of darknesse in the world, in opposition to the Kingdom of Christ. 66, 67
- II. What confirmation to our faith, the certainty hereof, and of these powers of darknesse, doth clearly afford. 68
- III. That great truth of the immortality of the soul, with the clearest evidence to reason, as well as by the certainty of faith. 69, 70
- IV. How confirming a seal to the Scripture that great change which passeth on all men by death is, and how its no natural accident. 72
- V. Some special assistances to the Christians faith of an eternal glory in heaven, and to serve an unavoidable conviction thus on the greatest Atheists. 74
- VI. Something of a visible Hell, in some near approach hereof even to mens senses, held forth to awake and convince the world of such a state of horrou and torment in another world. 77
- VII. Some assistances to our faith of that great truth of the Resurrection of the body. 79

C H A P T E R III.

The Confirming worke of religion farther improven wth respect to this dismal and amazing time we are now fallen in.

S E C T I O N I.

To hold forth what may be both for light and confirmation upon this great distresse the Churches of Christ are now under. 81, 82

S E C T I O N II.

How great a talent we stand accountable for in this day of such immediate and extraordinary appearences of the Lord for confirming the same publick cause of the Reformed Church since the Reformation, which we are now called to adhere to. 84

S E C T I O N III.

What manner of time is the present lot of the Church now fallen in, and what judgment we ought to have hereof from the Scripture, for our furthest confirming in such a day. 93

S E C T I O N IV.

Some special service that we are now called to, and accountable for, in behalf of the truth, and for sanctifying the Lord in the eyes of others, who are under so great a talent of light and confirmation in the same. 99

F I N I S.

(I.)

AN IDEA,

*Of the confirm'd state of a Christian in
dismall and shaking times.*



Ho the same measure of *Christians*
establishment in the truth be not
alike to all, but must have re-
spect to the different *trialls*, *ta-*
lent, & *improvements* of such for
this end; yet may it be cause of astonishment,
how rare any study of this kinde is now to be
found, when its not only one of the highest
concerns of *Christianity*, but in a more then or-
dinary way called for, as the *work of this day*;
yea, that this is a part of religion, which seemes
left improven of any, for the *more gene-*
rall state of professours within the Church; un-
der some conviction hereof, was this essay de-
signed, where with humble confidence (I may
say) the *truth* hath been sought with that seri-
ous enquiry into the *nature of these things* held
forth, as I judged needfull for such, who have
so great ane interest & venture not only through
time, but for all *eternity*, to support upon the
alone certainty hereof, & er these *dayes of*
triall, which we now see, passe over this *genera-*
tion, it may be found this was not unseasona-
ble, or without cause directed to such a time,

A

if

if the Lord graciously bleſſe the ſame ; nor will it (I hope) be found incongruous & without uſe to preſent yet further , in ſuch a method , & way of example , ſome cleare proſpect of a *confirmed ſtate in religion* , & what theſe ought to be , who with light & aſſurance of minde would *follow the Lord fully* , in ſuch a day , as is here offered in a *7 fold Character* , under which a *truly confirmed Chriſtian in the truth of his profeſſion* may be ſtated.

CHARACTER. I. That he is one *who hath another ſence* , & *impreſſion of this great ſtudy for attaining to a confirmed ſtate in religion* , & is on *higher grounds preſſed to follow the ſame* , then *what moſt of the viſible Church ſeemes to apprehend* ; & ſhould be thus conſidered.

1. As one to whom the *glory of the Chriſtian profeſſion* is in the higheſt degree deare , & to have the world ſee , that ſuch as embrace the ſame & does moſt fully adventure on the teſtimony of God in his word , are theſe alſo who walks on the higheſt principles of true , & *enlightned reaſon* ; yea , who takes deeply to heart that obligation which is on all , who deſires to advance the *repute* , & *honor of the truth* , to be in ſuch *tearmes* therewith upon *its own evidence* , as they may know how to ſerve a rationall conviction both on *Atheiſts* , & *infidels* , if called thereunto.

2. Who ſees alſo , how ſuch is the ſtate of
faller

fallen man, as stands in need of all the *contributions* that can be, not only to strengthen the *Christians faith*, and beare out against the strong assaults of *infidelity*, but to gain also more credit and *veneration* to the truth with these who are not easily delt with, but by such *meanes*, as beares some *congruity* to their *naturall light*, and *reason*; for which end the Lord hath afforded these ministeriall helpes, to render the misbeleefe of the world, or any pretense of hesitation about his truth more fully inexcusable.

3. He thus sees, how the most important, and *fundamentall truths* of Christianity, needs the greatest *confirmation of his faith*, & for these who enter in so high & discriminating a profession from the residue of the world, to know in what manner they embrace the same: yea that the *naturall order of things* does absolutely require to have the *foundation* sure laid, on which so great a *superstructure* must rest, so as he judgeth it a *work by its selfe*, and to need some peculiar retiring his soul in the most serious *recesses*, and *composure* thereof, to attain a *stedfastnes of his own* in the truth, and to know the strong and *firm convoyances* of that greatest *mystery* of the gospel, in such a manner, as needes no *paund of a miracle* to confirm the same. But he knowes here that no sharpness of mens *naturall understanding* about the truth can ever attain a true rest, and *settlement of minde*

(4.)

therein , without a *humble* , and *serious spirit* stooping doune before the wisedome of God , and to enter as *little Children* into his Schoole; yea that by *humble practice* , and obedience of the gospel there is ane undoubted coming up to the greatest assurance and *clearest demonstrations of the same* , as *Joh. 7: 17.*

4. He knowes that as nothing tends more to shake mens spirits , and stagger them about the truth , then a *light and transient view* hereof , so does the greatest *establishment* , follow on the nearest approach by a *deep and serious enquiry* about the same , and thus clearly sees that if such who look but at a *distance* on the way of religion , did but once come that length of triall , as to have their spirits *separat* , by a more serious reflection thereon , the *first view* they should have , could not but be matter of wonder , and amazement , to think what can determine and support in so marvellous a way as the life and *practice of Christianity* , which is so visibly above nature , and wherein they must do violence to the same , where they must part with the *multitude* , and oppose themselves to the strongest tyde of *exemple* , and must *endure also in hope* , and *believe for things not seen* , which were never the object of humane sense , to any in this earth , and are oft called to part with the most desireable things of *sence* , upon the alone credit of their *faith* , yea , where they

they must enter in that profession, on no other *tearmes*, then to be *martyrs* for the same, and *seall it with their blood*; so that he must needs see a Christian according to the *rule* and *institution of the gospel*, to be the greatest *riddle*, and *wonder* of any sight within time; but when such come more close and neare upon this *triall*, and have once understood the *nature* and *greatnesse of that security* which these have to adventure on, yea what is the glory of their *hope*, and the sure spring of their supplies, for their work and trials within time, then will this *second wonder* unspeakably exceed the *first*; how its possible that such are not of a more *raised*, and *enlarged spirit*, in the service of the Gospel, in that short season they have here for it on the earth, and how their *triall* should not be more to *beare the joy of so great a prospect*, and *expectation*, then any present griefes and troubles, yea how mens life who indeed makes earnest of the Christian profession, is not in some more continued transport of *ravishment and wondering*, to know that they are surely made for an *eternall state* in another world, and are among these on whom the *glorious God* hath choised to have the exceeding riches of his grace shewed forth in these *regions of blessedness* above for ever.

5. He hath another sight and prospect of the *Christian Creed*, then most who give ane easy

A 3

assent

(6.)

assent thereunto; and hath his reason so dazeled with the *revelation of the gospel* and of the *wonders* thereof as hath put him to such an exercise as that 2 Chr. 6: 8. How to credit his eyes therewith, the more deep reflexion he hath upon the same, but will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth; and to judge their case, who after some fluctuating suspence, are admitt to see the truth of Christianity, with that *certainty of its evidence*, as the greatness of such a discovery does require, may have some resemblance to that transport which the *Angells* had at the *first being of the creation*, where the *morning starres sung together*, and the *Sonnes of God shouted for joy*, to see themselves thus, who were brought out of pure nothing, entered into that inestable light of seeing God, and of their own blessedness in him, in so high a degree; so that he accounts it one of the highest attainements of religion, for a *Christian indeed to believe the articles of his own faith*, and have his soul thus as fully perswaded, as of his being, that such a time assuredly was, & now many ages since past, when the *glorious Redeemer of the Church*, the *second person of the God head* came doune from heaven and was revealed in our nature, that on him as *surety* to divine justice in the roome of the *Elect Church*, was the whole *guilt*, and *sin* thereof transferred, and in this marvellous way did the holy God take
satis-

satisfaction to himselfe , by himselfe ; that thus our nature is exalted , by the incarnation of Christ above the nature of Angels ; that the time is neare when the meanest afflicted Christian , shall draw in no other aire , then the breathings of the higher Paradise above , and now hath an eternity of joy , and blessednesse before him ; that within a very little time he shall know this welcome of our blest Redeemer to his followers here on the earth , come ye blessed of my father inherit the Kingdome , &c. when he shall take off the crosse , and put on the crown , when it shall be then no more a matter of faith , but of sense to be partakers of that inheritance with the saints in light , and know these proper mansions in that state of glory and peculiar assignement thereunto which all the Redeemed shall then have , and be adjoynd in the same classe with the Elect Angels to be as pure flames of love , and joy , yea know what its to walk in these streetes of the new Jerusalem which are as gold transparent as Christall , and what that meeting will be of his soul perfected , and in a triumphant state with his glorified body , raised incorruptible and never to part any more ; and to have his proper share of that blessed and greatest solemnity , that shall be celebrated in heaven of the marriage supper of the lamb , with the whole triumphant Church , and heare that honourable account which the great judge will then

make of these *trials* of his faith, and sharp conflicts which he had gone through within time, with that *solemn testimony of approbation* which will be given thereof, and since its sure these *great things* must be a part of the *Christian faith*, can it be strange, that such, as would in that manner converse therewith (tho they be not yet seen) as no lesse undoubted *realities* then any present *objects of sense*, be not easily satisfied with a low degree of evidence and confirmation of their judgement, but that their joy who are sure here should be perfected so far as this state of mortality can beare, and thus find it easy to *rejoyce*, and *glory in tribulation*, and to weep now for a season, who are to rejoyce for ever, yea to say in the words of *Mephibosheth*, let them take it all, & enjoy the same, since he who is their *life and exceeding joy*, *lives and reignes*, who is infinitely better to them then all these things.

6. He accounts the *strengthening of his faith*, to be such a concern, not only as it is his *soules venture for all eternity*, but as the *highest way of gloryfying God here*, that what ever tends to a more full *confirmation* of the same, he reckons also one of the greatest *additions to his joy and comfort* within time; and that these manyfold *assurances* with such *reduplication* thereof which the Lord hath himselfe given for this end, are such as no *fragments* of such a *talent* should be

be lost ; & tho he knowes the greatest *demonstrations* of our faith can add nothing to the *certainty of divine truth* in it selfe ; yet are they thus given in regard of the strong *trials* of a Christians life , and of what their *weaknesse* stand in need of for support.

7. Its in this study , he sees and takes to heart , how not only the *condition of man* in the earth , but the *profession of Christ* also calls for such a reckoning, that he may have *trialls* in that manner dispensed , when no *visible refuge* will be found in the least to stand by , but all humane comfort and assistance wholly to succumb ; as needes his laying in such ballast now in its season , and to be founded thereon with that assurance of judgment , as is needfull for that day , when he must either get through in the alone way of *beleiving* , against *sence*, or *perish*, and tho no such attainments of light can beare out then without present and immediat *influences* from above, and that it is sure *according to the day* , so must the *Christian strength* be , yet does he see also , the want of ane established judgment , and of some *proper stock* laid up of *aides* , and *assurances* this way forgainst a sharpe storm , is like to make *sad work among the professors of this age* , er the *trialls* of such a time have done their work.

8. He sees also how the greatest *contest* , which is this day in the world , is *betwixt God* , and

man , upon the *truth and assurance of his word* ; and that the highest *triall* , and *probation of a Christian* , in which all the *trialls of their life* does still meet , may be resolved here , if they receive the *testimony of God* in his word as an *absolute security* to rely on , yea or not , and tho this is the peculiar glory of the *only true God* , to have ane absolute *dependance* of his whole work on himselfe , and to be the *alone center of his peoples rest* , yet may nothing be more evident , then that with most he beares that name , of *being their trust* , when the whole burden and weight thereof lyes alone upon visible grounds , so that those *bonds , and promises* which he hath himselfe given unto men does beare no more credit , then they have some *externall surety in the earth* , which they still looke after , to stand as it were good and *responsible* for the same , which is the highest *indignity* can be offered to the glorious Majesty of God.

9. He does much take to heart this *present period of time* , wherein the fluctuating suspence and *halting* of so many under a visible profession of the truth is now one of the most dismall signes hereof ; & that it seemes to be the *time* , wherein the Lord will in ane unusuall way take this generation off any *implicit profession* of the same ; and when that *great roll of visible professors* in all the *reformed Churches* may be er long in that manner called , as each must answer

to his own name , and put to stand to the *prooffe* before the world , when no temporall interest, but *internall motives* and certainty of the truth upon its own *evidence* , must beare out ; yea that the most *establisht* may er long finde it not easy to be kept from staggering , and a few dayes come in the Churches way , more remarkable for *triall* then hath been in some ages before.

CHARACT. II. *A truely confirmed Christian*, may be thus also stated as one who is in the first place most deeply taken up about that *rare plot of mans redemption* , and to see these great and wonderfull truths there, not singly , and apart , but in that harmony, order and consent of all the parts thereof , as they are linkt together in this marvellous frame , so as to make the whole one entire peece, and where no part does in the least interfere with an other , which he finds to be one of the most principall demonstrations of this great mystery of the Gospell, that the Lord hath given for confirming his peoples faith ; and thus in another manner then formerly can now entertain his soul herewith , and have his joy unspeakably hightned, 1 to see at once the ruined state of fallen man , and what a floodgate of all evill is let loose on that race, not only *morally in sin* , but what is *penall* in the woe and miseryes thereof ; yea such a state , where all hope of releefe is for ever cut off in the way of nature or by any created help ; and where
the

the execution of a *righteous sentence* on such for the voluntare violation of a *law*, *just, holy* and *equall*, can be no impeachment in the least of the *righteousness of God*; But then therewith he does see such a releefe brought to light as can not only answer the whole extent of this ruin, but the *glory of God* more eminently displayed therein, then if the *law* had been *obeyed*, or *absolutely execute* in its *penalty* on the whole race of man, yea which makes this more wonderfull to see a higher *dispensation of grace* unto man now under the gospel then was to *Adam in his primitive state*; whereby innumerable Christians are made to endure and prevail over *stronger assaults* then broke him even in his *integrity*, which is a conjunction so marvellous that the great and infinit God only could finde out and effectuat. 2. He does now see how cleare a consistence and harmony is here, that he who had no sin by *inhesion*, but holy, harmles, and undefiled, should be under the greatest weight of sin by *imputation* and by the exactest rule of divine justice made liable to answer both the whole *duty*, and *full penalty of the Law*, having as *surety* betwixt the *creditor & debtor*, put himselfe in his peoples roome to answer the full demands thereof both for *debt*, and *duty*. 3. It is here he does see that blest consent and harmony betwixt the spotles *justice of God*, and his marvellous *grace*, so as his *love* is to the highest glorified, in that marvellous

vellous way ; as secures the full and compleat satisfaction of his *Law* , and all the rights of *justice* inviolable. 4. Whilst he is thus dazled with the greatnes of such a light , and put to enquire what such a mystery can mean ; he is then further led on to see that *rare plot* and contrivance of the *covenant of reconciliation* between God and man , here within time to be the very *duplicit* , and *counterpart* of that eternall transaction and *stipulation between the father and the son* ; and thus sees what ever God hath declared and *promised* in the one to his Church , was first *promised and secured to our blessed head in the covenant of Redemption* ; wherein as with a reverend and awfull distance , so with the greatest evidence of light he is made to see here these reciprocall *obligations* betwixt them , and *mutuall trust* for making good the whole tearmes thereof in the apoynted time. 5. He does also clearly see that *rare order & harmony* of time in these *signall periods* of the revelation of this great mystery of Christ which from its more dark discovery and dawning did still more gloriously open its selfe to the Church by a *graduall light* and unvailing of the same, as the *Sun* in its course unto the perfect day ; yea hath his faith thus unspeakeably confirmed to see herewith the *gospell Church* being still the same , whither of *Jewes* or *Gentil's* , and how that *series* and *consent* hath yet never been broken off since the beginning of *one Church* separat from the residue
of

of mankinde set apart as a peculiar people for the Lord, where none ever had right and priviledge to be members of the same, but by *faith in the Messias*, and profession of their obedience to his Lawes. 6. It is in this *union and harmony* he sees the whole branches and parts of gospell obedience most exactly meet, and terminat, to advance both the greatest excellency and *blessedness of man*, and *assimulat* him to the *blessed image of God*, yea how all the rules and precepts there does so entirely conspire for this end as may constrain the world to see, and admire the *glorious nature*, and *perfections of him*, whole lawes these are, wherein he does so brightly shine forth. 7. Nor can he looke seriously herein and not see that sweet *concord* as a part of this *harmony*, which is betwixt the *promissory*, and *mandatory part of the gospell*, so as the Christians comfort is most fully established and no duty abolished; but the very path rod to the most full enjoyments of the promise and proper way to attain rest and tranquillity of spirit must be ever here by taking on the yoke of Christ. 8. Yea to confirm this entire union and harmony more fully he now sees that exact and marvellous correspondence which is betwixt that first *fundamentall promise* of the *Messias*, and the event; betwixt the whole ancient *figures and types* of the *leviticall service* and the revelation of *Christ himselfe*, in which all these did meet as their proper center, and now have their full end and

accom-

accomplishment. 9. His confirmation thus grows to see that wonderful consent of *Christianity*, and native result hereof to put fallen man in a due posture towards God, towards his neighbour, and himselfe, so as he may know by *faith* and *adoration* how to enjoy God, and his brother by love, and thus by *patience*, *meeknes* and *humility* to possesse his own soul, and enjoy himselfe. 10. Yea it is in this rare and wonderfull frame he is made to see (and no sight can be like this) that exact correspondence which is betwixt the *foundation* and *superstructure*, how the whole tract of the *gospell* is but one entire and compleat mean to glorify God, and restore fallen man to the highest blessednes, how that excellent stream of *sanctification* does flow from that fountain head of an eternall decree herein, which does still run under the ground, until it break up at last in the heart of each Christian, by the effectuall call of the *gospell*; and thus runs doune through time untill it lose its selfe in that unconceivable deep of *perfection* and *glory*. Thus is it that each Christian might attain some higher degrees of *confirmation* in his *faith*, then most seemes either to know or looke after if he understood more how to improve this rare *comparing work* of Religion by setting the great truths and principles thereof in their order & dependance so as each may be seen, in its necessary coherence with other and under its proper aspect.

But the more deep reflexion and enquiry he hath

bath herein, he is the more made to wonder and finds this one of the great assaults to his faith, that the *revelation of the Christ, and redemption by his blood should have no greater effects this day* amongst men, and that the *Christian world* is not in some other manner awaked with the *glory* of this light, and preſt after a larger ſpreading and *diffuſion* of this *higheſt and univerſall good* to poore mankind; yea the more he conſiders this it doth highten his amazement to think how mens deſigns in the matter of duty and ſervice for the Kingdome of Chriſt, can be ſo *low* within time, whoſe *deſigns and hopes* in the cloſe therof are ſo *high* in the matter of *enjoyment*; or take ſo litle to heart, that the whole *day of the diſpenſation of the Goſpell*, amidſt the moſt diſmal trials may fall in therewith, is a continued time wherein we are called to *keep the feaſt*, and from one age to another celebrate the ſame, as a perpetuall *Jubily of joy and exultation*, ſince Chriſt our paſſover was *ſacrificed for us*; but oh how rare a thing ſeems this to be, and how litle of that flame and fervency of love to our bleſſed Redeemer is now *kindled on his altar*, that might be expected on ſuch wonderfull incitements therto, and which once was in the Church.

CHARACT.III. Though a *confirmed Chriſtian* muſt be ſpecially ſtated as ſuch, who *knowes the internall part of religion, and ſealing work of the Holy Ghoſt* on his own ſoul, which is not by words, but

but *things* of the highest *truth*, *substance*, and *reality*; yet is he herein not alone satisfied to know this by *spirituall sense*, untill he can see the same with the furthest *evidence of light* also to his mind; and have no lesse a clear and *judicious tryal* of this great myserie of *experimentall religion*, for confirmation of his faith, then to be *sensibly affected* with the felt power therof. And in the *first place* why this is necessarily requisite and called for, with respect to the *confirmed state* of a Christian, may be thus *considered*, on some few grounds.

1. That the things of religion, which must be *experienced* within time, are such sublime, and *wonderfull mysteries*, as may be just matter of astonishment, and make men a wonder to themselves, to think that these present *pledges* of so great a hope which is to come, are no *shadows*, no appearances of things, but most sure and undoubted *realities*; and that such are this day in the earth who knowes so near a converse with an *invisible God*, and the *supernaturall truths* of his word, with the sensible feeling of that *inestimable love of Christ*, by this demonstration of *experience*; yea who in such dismall times does assuredly know what the *joy of his presence*, and an immediate fellowship with their blessed head is, upon the greatest certainty of tryall; since these are so high, and marvelous things, which exceed all *naturall understanding*, as the *felt sweetness* of their enjoyment should not more deeply

take men up , then to see the *truth* , and *surenesse* of these principles , wheron they found herein.

2. Because this testimony of the truth of *experimental religion* , should be understood not only as its of highest use for Christians *personall comfort* and establishment , but with respect to the *publick interest* of the Church , as a special trust reposed thereon , to have the *credit* of this greatest testimony and *seal* , demonstrably cleared, with the furthest strength of *harmonious* , and *argumentive reason* , for such who look but at a distance yet thereon , as may not only awake them to some deeper *sense* and impression hereof , but constrain them to see , how no *naturall science* hath more clear , and firm *demonstrations* , then the *experimental part* of *Christianity* , (which is the very life and soul thereof,) may have to mens *reason* , and *judgement* , tho they never knew it within themselves ; yea for this end should such , as have experienced the *truth* , and *vertue of the Gospell* , reckon themselves as *witnesses* who are *judicially sisted* to put their *seal* therunto; & is now more called for in an age, when no particulare truth seems more strongly impugned , then the *reality of experimental godlinesse* is , and become as a *publick theam of derision* , tho men must either quite the whole revelation of the Scripture , or see this to be as *essentials* to the *constitution of a Christian* , as *vital principles* are to a *living man*.

3. Yea

3. Yea its sure herein , that such as take religion to heart , must needs look to be put to the *greatest tryal of its certainty*, and should most nearly concern them to know if they can *abide as firmly by their spirituall sense* as by that which is *naturall* , and doe thus know as surely in themselves the *operations and motions of a spirituall life*, as that they have being by *nature* ; and that here is no doubtfull or abstract notions , but who have had such deep *tryall and reflexion* on the same as these who dare venture their *eternal state* on the known certainty theirow, as they could thence *reason* their soul to a stedfast adherence to the truth , if they were called to *sacrifice their lives* therto, from what *rare experiments*, and *proofs*, they have oft had of the same in their own *tryall*.

4. It doth more specially call for a demonstrative clearing of the credit of this testimony, as one of the *services of religion* , to promote the Kingdom of Christ amongst men , which seems least *improven* of any with respect to the *general state* of such who are within the Church, who are so great strangers to the same ; yea should be judged one of the *great wants* of this day , when Atheism is now at so astonishing a hight , that it is not more studied to have the *experimentall part of religion* , (which in it self lyes deep and hid , and is a secret betwixt God and the Christians soul ,) with such *clearnesse* , and by that *manner of evidence* demonstrat to

the world , as might tend to beget some more *awfull sense* and conviction hereof, (when such clear and unanswerable grounds might be improved for this end) on these who look thereon as some strang and dark riddle, so as they could no more deny or withstand the *evidences* hereof, then that they have a *living soul which yet they never saw*, or could ever be the object of human sense. And how sad a prospect should this give of the greatest part of the *Christian world*, who not only know nothing of the *true glory*, and *spirituall powers of Christianity*, but have not the very *notion*, or any *sense* of the reality of such a thing.

But in the 2d place it is thus that each Christian, for being solidly confirmed in the way of religion, may as *clearly see*, as he does *sensibly feel*, the truth of his own experience, and have his faith as fully established by this *inward and great demonstration* of the things of God, as his *affections are quickned*, upon such strong and *demonstrative grounds* of the *certainty* hereof, as these are.

I. By considering, his *present and former state*, that not in a dream, but in the most deep and serious composure of spirit, he knows how *once he was blind* and wholly estranged from this *mysterie of Christian experience*, which now he does see; and once had the same *sentiment* hereof with such who doe most deeply reflect on the same, but no sooner did the truth, and
power

power of religion cease on his soul , then he found himself *entered into a new world* to know the dawnings of this *marvelous light* , and what belongs to these injoyments , and *vital acts* of Christianity , that hath not the least dependence on any *naturall cause*.

2. By considering that *marvelous superstructure* of *experimentall religion* , which from the *inward observation of Christians in all ages* , is such as the *world could not almost contain the books* , that might *be write hereof* , which yet is so intirely founded on one and the *same foundation* , and does in all the *lines of this great circumference* , still meet in the *same center* ; yea thus how intire and *harmonious* a thing religion in all the parts therof is *within* upon the soul , as well as *without* , so as every *step in this way* of the experience of the saints is no groping in the dark, but what is by *line and rule* , with as sure and demonstrable a connexion with the *externall testimony of the word* , as there is in *nature* betwixt the *cause* and the *effect* ; which affords a more wonderfull assistance to his faith , then the greatest *externall miracles* could ever doe; and tho the spirit of God does sometimes in an *extraordinaire manner* reveal himself to men (as *acts of his Sovereign prerogative* which make no rule) yet with the established *constitutions of his word* does the continued experience of the saints most harmoniously ever *correspond*.

3. By considering thus also the *being*, & *reality* of *grace*, not in its *effects* only but in its *proper cause* and *original*, & how the *truth* of *holinesse* in the life of a Christian is so express a transcript of the Gospel, in its *external revelation*, that the *impresse* doth not more clearly answer the *seal on the wax* then it doth beget the same *forme and image* of it self in such as *believe*; yea also that conformity it bears to the ever blessed *Architype*, as well as to the *revealed rule*, and how bright a discovery is thus of so glorious a *being*, and *nature*, to which its conformed, who is the alone *paterm*, and *exemple* of all *truth and holinesse*; which is so great a discovery, as he is made to wonder, how men in this age are so much awakened to find out the true *Phænomena* of *nature*, (though in its own room a most choise study, and specially desirable,) and will be as in a *transport*, upon some rare *natural experiment*, as made one in that manner cry out *εὐφῶντα εὐφῶντα*; whilst here is another kind of *demonstration*, and of more transcendent interest then all these could ever amount to, on which the eyes of most are this day shutt.

4. By considering that *uncheangable congruity*, which is betwixt the *nature* of these things, *injoyed* in the whole institutions of the Gospel, and *mens being made happy thereby*, now in their present state, and how great a temporal *renew* of

of the fruits of religion, as inward *confidence*, *peace*, and *serenity of mind*, doth as natively follow the life and practice herof, as the fruit of a tree answers to its kind, and is ever found the alone true *relief of mankind*, against all the griefs and bitterneſſe of time; yea that its no distance of place, but of mens spirit by *impurity*, and corruption that makes ſo ſad a distance betwixt God, and man here in the earth.

5. He is thus further confirmed upon this great *testimony of experimentall religion*, by considering that its ſure ſuch as does bear this witneſſe are known; 1. to be ſuch who are of the moſt *discerning and judicious* in the things of *reason*, as any elſe. 2. Whoſe *walke and practice* uſe to have the greateſt authority over mens conſcience with whom they conſeſe. 3. who are found moſt intently taken up in the *retired worke, and duties of religion*, that can have no reſpect to the witneſſe and obſervation of others. 4. Who ſeeks no *implicit credit* from any herein, but does obteſt men to *come and ſee*, and prove the ſame in their their own *experience*, with an *appeal* to the moſt exact inquiry, and *rationall tryall* of all mankind, if here be any *caſuall thing*, and if that testimony of the *doctrinall, and experimentall part* of religion be not ſtill one and the ſame. 5. Who alſo out of the moſt *remott places* of the earth, and otherwiſe ſtrangers amonghſt themſelves, does yet moſt harmoniouſly meet in the ſame wit-

nesse , and are thus *mutually disclosed to other* , by a near and fealing intercourse of their souls , from such an *onnesse in a spirituall state* and these *specifick properties* of a *spirituall* , and *new nature* , with as discernible evidence as if one man should meet with ane other of the *same kind* , in such a place of the earth which were only inhabited with *beasts*.

6. By considering also , (with a deep and serious reflection hereon ,) that sure and known *conjunction* , which is betwixt the most *rare experiences* of a Christians life , and the most *searching tryalls* thereof , with that uniform consent , that hath in all ages of the Church been , in such marvelous things , as these. I what *solemn tokens and testimonies* of the love of God , and his *acceptance* , are found usually to meet his people in the *entry* of some great *tryall* , or *service* for him , even in some unusuall manner then , in the *sence whereof* , as it was with *Elijah* , they have been made to goe *many days after in a wildernesse state* ; yea how this does not respect *persons* only , but *Churches* , that the word still useth to goe before with some remarkable *confirming worke* to secure the heart , before the *crossse* and some special tryal of *persecution* comes .

2. That as each day hath its *proper burden* , and *worke* , so hath it its *proper allowance* provided for the same , which should be no lesse sought after by a Christian , then his *dayly bread* , and
when

when the pressure of such a day grows to some more singulare hight , so also should the expense hereof be in faith sought for & expected.

3. How the *choisest mercies* are reserved to the *saddest times* of a Christians lot , and most usually crosse to their own *choise*, and thus hath had the greatest struglings with these *methods of providence* , which hath in the issue tended most to their upmaking. 4. Yea how the returnes of a *long deferred hope* after much humble on- waiting , have been to such as a *Pisgah*, whence they have not only had a clear and comforting prospect of their *bypast tryals*, but for being more fully confirmed of the *time to come* ; and can bear now that testimony, *that the Lord hath cleared all bygones to them*, and hath taken the *vail off his worke* , which for long had been as a dark and strang riddle.

7. This likeways gives a most clear, and confirming prospect of that great *seal of experience*, when he can now see , both in his own case and of others, what the *issue of believing in a singular exigence and tryal* and upon some special act of *trust and adventure herein* does at last come to ; which the more deeply its considered he finds one of the most peculiare *assistances to his faith* , and one of the greatest attainments of *experimentall religion* within time , when he can thus see the same way of *believing*, (in some strong and extraordinare assaults , which he hath had to

crush and break him herein ,) which hath carried so many thorow in their saddest tryals, bring him also in *his turn*, to be an *instance in the same kind*, to bear an honourable testimony to this *sure, and excellent way of believing before the world*, and that none fear, *after him*, to hold by the *promise of God* and venture on that security, tho it then seem against hope, whose *dispensations*, did yet never, never give his word the lye.

CHARACT. IV. Such is a truly confirmed Christian, who in a dismall time, is not staggered in his faith from the present signs and appearances thereof, but hath his soul ballast with such solid grounds of confirmation against the same, as these providences, wherat others doe most stumble, tends to his further strenthning in the way of the Lord, when he does now clealy see;

1. How tribulation and the crosse makes one of the most illustrious and beautiful parts of the whole frame of Providence about the Church, and in the lot of each Christian, so as there can be no possible stumbling to any for want of light here, that sore tryalls, and distresse should most remarkably follow these in their journey, who have an eternall blessednesse before them in the close hereof, when so great a part of the Scripture is directed not only for comfort but for a clear conduct of the Christians faith, through all the intricacies and labyrinths of such a dispensation, and thus sees how highly congruous it is to the

to the infinit wisdom of God , that so *strait and narrow a way* , in such a *state of tryall* as is here, should goe before the state of everlasting injoyment ; that there should be such a *stage and theatre* also , whereon the *passive graces of the spirit* , may not only be *exercised* , but *displayed in their true lustre and glory before Angels and men* ; yea that thus the Redeemed of the Lord be first *trained* in so sharp a *warfare* , as may not only put a *due value and respect* on the greatness of that *triumph and reward* which is to come, but be matter of *ineffable joy and exultation* , that ever they were admitt thus to evidence their love and adherence to their *blessed head* and his *truth* here on the earth , and accounted *worthy* to be put on some *hotter service* , and to *peculiare tryals and conflicts* this way beyond others , for some *example and incouragement* to the *Church in their day* ; and here also he can now see how the greatest *injoyments of comfort* are more owing to the most sharp and *afflicting tryals* of their life, then to the greatest *externall calme* ; and that to *endure patiently and suffer for the name Christ* is such a *priviledge* as the *elect Angels* have not been admitt to , yea that the Lords *chastning worke* , and forest *smiting* of his own , is an *act also of saving* ; so that thus the more deeply he searcheth here , the more does he see , *admire* , and *consent* to that *glorious piece of the administration of providence* about the *Church* , and finds
it to

it to be one of the greatest confirmations of his faith within time.

2. He does now clearly see how the truth and faithfulness of God is commensurate to his whole worke of Providence & that all the lines hereof, as they doe lead from his revealed councill in the Scripture, which is the adequate signe of his eternall councill and decrees, so doe they returne thither again, to make this great demonstration clear; that if a full History were write of this world, and what hath been conspicuous thorow the whole series of times past in all these conjunctions of inferior causes, whether necessary, free, or contingent, and of such events that seem most casual, it should be nothing else but an exact transcript and history of the Bible, to bear this witness, *quod mundus nihil aliud est quam Deus explicatus secundum scripturam*; but though a full discovery hereof be not attainable within time, yet is it a sad and deplorable want, that the great acts of the Lord, in each age of the Church are not more searched and sought out of all them that take pleasure therein, that they may be seen, observed, and admired by that part of the creation, Angels and Men, who are only in a capacity to know the same; which is a service for the Lord wherein his praise, and declarative glory is so highly concerned, as a Christian should account the meanest roome herein one of the most desirable attainments within time; yea it seems

seems just matter of regret also that this comes not under a more publick care and nortice of *particulare Churches* and of the *Christian Magistrate*, where religion hath any true regard, to have such *solemne providences* as occurre in that time, and place, which may be called *experimenta lucifera* to the Church, and of a further reach and extent then any private use, both *search'd* after and *recorded* as becomes so high a *service to the Christian cause* and one of the highest concerns of the *posteritie*, to have such not only possessed of a *pure religion*, but of that *seal* also; which the Lord hath in the *great acts* of providence *appended* therto, and thus to have that *increase*, which each successive age brings therewith to the *publick stock of the Church*, looked after, as a piece of the greatest trust reposed theron, so that the Children rise not up and say, we have not *heard nor have our fathers faithfully transmitt* to us the *wonderous works which the Lord hath wrought in their time*.

3. He is thus also tought to see the *signs* and *demonstrative causes* of the most strang judgments on the Church, to be as *clear in the Scripture* as they are in the *event*, and though the holy God in the day of his *patience*, and *long-suffering* is not alike quick in the execution of the *sentences* of his word, yet does he ever establish the *authority of his Laws* by the *works* of his providence in the most opportune season;
and

and as *judgment deferred*, is no *acquittance*, so does it more threaten its being the greater, when it comes, then a *quick and present dispatch*; yea though this *tempest* which now blowes on the Churches of Christ, come to a greater hight, and the darknesse be such, as no *Moon* or *Starres* may for many dayes yet appear of any *visible signs of hope*, yet is his soul thus at rest whilst he can see the *credit of the truth cleared*, on which he hath more in dependence then any *adventure* within time, and does rejoyce, whatever miscarrying may be of inferiour ends, that this great and *ultimate end* of the works of God is secured herein, and the *glory of his truth* does shine forth in the most strang and *amazing acts of his providence*, wherat many are ready to stagger, when they doe not *wisely* consider the same.

4. He sees now likewise, so *high a value* which the Lord puts on the tryall of his peoples faith, and that the great dispensation wherby he deales with men is *by trust* and on the *credit of his word*, as it addes further to his confirmation, to see all human and *visible refuges* oft taken out of his Churches sight, yea his *greatest works* in the earth make the *greatest delay* er they be brought forth, & his Churches case put so far beyond help before a *cure*, as the first quickning of her crushed and almost *dead hope*, must be at the *mouth of the grave*; and he is thus herein

in more singularly strentned , that when the Lord speaks the same in the *way of providence* , which he hath spoke in his word , *not by might nor by power* , that he doth with unspeakable advantage supply and fill the roome therof by the next word , *but by my spirit saith the Lord* , which in this day should with a full assurance of faith be both sought and looked after.

5. It is in this rare study he attaines also the greatest confirmation to his faith that could possibly be desired within time, to see now when its so near the close therof and after all the revolutions of times past , how the truth and faithfullnesse of God , hath , as the sun in its strenth , still kept its way straight and fixt amidst all these dark clouds which have been to darken the same and is now gone its course untill it draws near to the full and perfect day; yea thus to see how signally this present age is sifted upon that same appeal and solemne testimony which as Josua gave , Josh. 23: 14. *that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning yow , all are come to passe to yow , and not on thing hath failed thereof* ; and Solomon did bear also at the dedication of the Temple , 1 Kings 8: v. 56. *Blessed be the Lord that hath given rest unto his people Israel , according to all that he promised , there hath not failed one word of all his good promise , which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant ; so is this now that great testimony of the latter dayes and the highest tribute of praise to the glory of God in his truth which can be*
given

given by men ; that this present generation stands accountable to make the same yea much greater appeal to the world , if they can instance one *promise*, or *prediction* of that sacred record of the Scripture which hath ever failed or fallen to the ground , but may be *this day read in the event*, & under these proper *circumstances* wherein it was to take place in its proper season , as evidently as it was *fortold* , and must still bear the same witness , *Psa', 18: 30. that the way of the Lord is perfect* , and his word *tryed* on all the *adventures of faith* , and *tryals* which to this moment of time have been made hereof, and of his being still a *buckler* to such as trust in him, and are called to transmitt this glorious *testimony* to the succeeding *ages*, that it may never cease to *shine* or want a publick witness thereto before *Angels* and *men* , untill the *whole mystery of God in his word be finished* in that magnificent close which shall be therof at the *second coming of the Lord*.

CHARACT. V. A *confirmed Christian* in this day should be thus also *stated*, as one who hath not only attained a *solid rest* and *settlement of mind*, upon the *certainty of the Christian faith* , but does know the *pure genuine truth of Christianity* , amidst such high oppositions betwixt the *Romish* and *Reformed Church* herein.

And in the 1 place hath in this *manner* sisted himself upon such a *tryal* ; 1 as one who knows there

there is but one *true* and *saving* religion in the earth, to which God hath annexed the promise of *eternall life* which can never be divided against it self. 2. Who knows that within a litle his religion will be tryed in the truth therof at the *tribunall of Christ*, where each must give account of himself unto God. 3. As such who sees there can be no possible *indifference* in the *exterior* profession of either way, but that so high a contrariety of principles is in this *opposition*, that if the *doctrine of Christ* be on the one hand, it is sure *Antichristianisme* must be on the other hand. 4. Yea who hath in that *abstract manner* sought to *state the case* herein with his own soul as if he were come out of *Paganism*, to give a serious assent to the *divinity of the Scripture*, and thus pressed to joyn in with that profession of the *Christian faith*, which is most exactly conforme to the same, in the *genuine* and *perspicuous* sence therof.

In the 2d place he hath sought to know, how he could imbrace the *Popish creed* and adventure his eternall state thereon, or can extinguish his *reason*, and *conscience* so far as to believe that the *holy God* would ever impose such a faith upon men, as this is; 1 where he must abandon these principles of *naturall reason* in the most necessary use therof, which God hath himself *planted* in mans soul, so as not to *trust his own eyes* but others in that great interest of his *eternall state*, and

C

with

with his own consent be shutt out from all proper knowledge of the *rule* of his religion, yea account a *blind* and *unlimited* obedience to men, amongst the highest excellencies of *faith*. 2. Where he must at once believe the *fullnesse*, and *perfection of the Scripture*, and to be not only fitted for that great end of *bringing mankind to God*, but for such an *universall use* herein, as to make the *simple wise*, and that the *poor may receive the Gospel*; and yet believe also that it is a *masse of dead, and unsensed characters*, untill the *Romish Clergy* put a just *sense* thereon, tho its *sense* and meaning is the very *soul* thereof, yea thus passe from the whole *letter* of the same, or any certainty of its truth, from *intrinsic evidences* and these *marks and characters of its divinity*, wherby the *Christian cause* could be maintain'd against *Pagans*. 3. Where he must believe also that these are the words of Christ *Joh. 7: 17. if any man doe my will he shall know my doctrine whither it be of God or not*, and that men *errs through not knowing the Scripture Math. 22.* and yet believe therewith, that these *sacred fountains of light* should be *shutt up*, to *keep men from going wrong*, and that the sole right of understanding the same belongs to a *few*, but not to the *multitude*, who yet can pretend no extraordinary *assistance or revelation* herein, nor will themselves come to these *waters of Jealousie to be tryed*. 4. Where he must needs believe that the *Scriptures are the oracles of God* committ

to the Church, to give answer in every darke case Rom. 3: 2. the type and forme of sound doctrine, Rom. 6. 17. unto whose sentence in all matters both of faith and practise, we are expressly referred, Is. 8. 20. and yet believe also that it hath no authority or decisive voice, but what is precarious and dependant on the Romish Church, and thus consent to have the whole Christian faith visibly unhinged of that foundation of the Scripture, and subjected to a supreme, visible, and infallible judge here in the earth, with such a claime of dominion over the faith of the saints, as the Apostles of Christ durst never owne, but did fully disclaime 2 Cor. 1: 24. 5. Where he must believe that Jesus Christ came for this end, to save lost man, and by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified Heb. 10: 18. and yet joyn in the same faith herewith a human satisfaction for sin, so as men may both merit, mediate, and supererogate above what is needfull for themselves, and be thus saved in the same way of life, which was by the covenant of works; ascribing that only to Christ to give salvation to their merits, which yet their own intrinsic value, and condignity doth require as a debt. 6. He finds not how in the same creed he could possibly hold by one Mediator betwixt God and man, where a plurality for this end is admitt; and by the reality of Christs human nature, and his having a true and finit bo-

dy , which is subjected to have a *new created being* , each time in the *Consecrate Hostia* ; or believe the truth of his *sufferings* as now fully accomplished , and to be *repeated* no more , when it is in that *dayly sacrifice of the Mefse* still offered , as a *propitiatory sacrifice for the liveing and the dead* ; so as on the most severe and impartial inquiry here , he cannot find how one holding by these *principles* should goe a further lenth then *Morality* , or claim another standing then by a *covenant of works*. 7. Nor knows he how to believe at once the truth of the *Gospell* , to be a *doctrine of Holinesse* , and *infinite purity* , and yet joyne in the same *faith* herewith such an *immunity and indulgence* for men to *fin* , as *money* can stand for *merit* , and the *rich* have the most *easy* and *large entrey* to heaven and account it a *priviledge* to *destroy themselves* ; yea where some externall *severities* and pennance to the flesh , like to the *lanching* and *gashing* of *Baals Priests* , are reckoned enough to supply the roome of *Christian mortification*. 8. Yea he finds it not posible to *believe* , that *fin* by the *blood of Christ* can only be *expiate* , and is his alone worke , who hath *purged our fin himself* , *Heb. 1: 3.* or that there are but *two ways* that lead to a *twofold state* of men , a *strait way* which leads to a *life* , and a *broad* unto *destruction* , *Math. 7: 14.* and yet believe that there is a *Purgatory* after this life , where men must be

be tormented and suffer *extream* pains there, to expiate such *venial* sins, as their prayers and penances here could not doe; yea is here made to wonder how any that believes such a thing, can ever have *true peace*, or *comfort in the world*, but doe either take it as a *fiction*, or forget themselves when they are *chearfull*; where the fear of such a *place*, the uncertainty of *release*, and how long a *term* it may be er this *purg- ing worke* be compleat, (when their own *writers* assigne no lesse time, then 10000 *Tears* as need- full to *satisfy* for some *sins*,) and least it prove a *reall hell*, must still be a present terrour; nor can he believe that such possibly doe *credit* them- selves herein, who assume this power to *change the condition of the dead*, since were it real- ly believed, that the *keyes* of such a *prison* were here in mens hand, and could, by the largest *dotations to the Romish Church*, get a safe out- gate thence, it were not strang, to see the *temporall state of Cristendome* in a short time made o- ver to these, and should Judge they were in a strang manner in dead priviledged by the whole residue of men, who by such a *power over the world to come* can make so easy a *purchase over this also which is pre- sent*. 9. He finds & is sure he could never get his *rea- son and conscience* brought to such a *faith*, even tho he made a *simulate* profession herein, of that pretended *supremacy of Peter as Bishop of Rome*, on which the whole *frame and structure of the pa-*

pacy leans , and the *vertue* of all the *pardons* and *absolutions* founded thereon , on which so many have adventured into an other world except he would thus *build on the sand* only , but not on *the rock*. 10. He finds also how such an *erection* of the *Gospell Church* in her militant state here , as the *Papacy* in its *complex* frame is , unite in such an *head* , as the *Pope* , who as the *sole vicegerent* of *Christ* in the earth , is at once invested with a *civill Monarchy* , and *universall* *empire* over the *Church* , to *impose* , and *judge* in the highest transactions that relate to the *eternall* state and *immortall* souls of men , is a thing that as to *matter of right* is as *forreign* to *the Scripture* and incompatible therewith , as *Mahumitanisme* can be , and as to *matter of fact* is a *trust* that no *created being* could ever exerce. 11. he sees & is sure that he must either lose sight both of the *rule* , and *spirit* of the *Gospell* , or have a just abhorrence at that way , where he should be inevitably *involved in a virtual consent* , and *accession* to all that *cruelty* and *blood* which for so many ages hath been shed therein , when its so clear that this was no *exorbitance* only of *practice* , but a native result of their *tenets* , and *principles* , and not only *dispensed* with , but counted an highly *meritorious* service ; yea when it is sure that under no *secular government* of the most *tyrannicall* state that ever was in the world , hath such *arbitrary violence* , and *oppression* been exerceed , or so much innocent

nocent blood shed, as by this party. 12. And tho his judgment stood indetermined and in an equall ballance upon this great controversie, he could not exerce reason, and not see upon what hand such a decision is as was in *Solomons time* of the true mother of the child, and who does most ruthfully seek to interesse themselves in the imminent hazard of the *Christian faith*, and under least influence of any *temporall motives* does this day stand for the truth and substance of *Chistianity*, and plead that it be not destroyed in envy and hatred to them; or on what side it is likewise that this manner of conquest is most followed to gain men to the profession of the truth by a prevailing evidence of their own light and judgment herein, and to require their exactest personall tryall, and inquiry about the same.

In the 3d place, tho he sees there can be no pretence of doctrinall wavering about the *Reformed religion*, and finds it not easy to comprehend how in one and the same age, wherein the truth hath so brightly shined, this way of *Popery*, should have prevalence, or gain ground any more by seduction from arguments to the reason or conscience of any; yet since it is an hower of temptation, and of fainting, above all that hath been hitherto known, and mens eyes are reasted with such a prospect of the time, as is like to stagger the faith of the most established, he is thus pressed, as one of the highest duties

of this day, to know and search out what may afford greatest assistance to his faith, from the dispensations of providence therein, and to know the evidence and strength of such reflections as these are for this end.

1. That its sure, as the *smallest things* which the Lord does afford, to strengthen and support against such a *storme*, should be seriously *improven*, and taken to heart; so does it lay us in the way of that *promise* for having *greater things* given to our *observation*; yea that now is the time when such as have been most comforted by the word of *promise*, may be put to the *forest tryal* in their *faith* of any, to keep off stumbling at the *worke* of providence, and be thus tryed according to the measure of these *confirmations*.

2. Tho the Churches *declinings* under greatest measures of *light* may be too visible, and that religion gains not by *persecution* as formerly, with such an amazing change as is now in her external condition, yet sees it to be no strange thing, when most signal *warnings* have gone before of such a tryal with too evident *dispositions* towards the same and discovery of its approach in all the *causes* therof; yea might be foreseen by all, that the *holy God* would not still bear with an *impure*, and *unlived* profession of the *pure and glorious truth* of Christianity, which hath now long been one of the most sad, and mortall signs in the *publick state* of religion; nor can it be found
that

that ever any Church did decline and fall from the purity of the truth and lose ground herein by externall persecution, where a judicial departure of its life and power did not remarkably goe before; so as it is not of late this hath been too clearly presaged, that s^cm dark and unusual measure of tryall from Antichrist, and that *ultima clades* of the Reformed Churches, was drawing near, which would be fore er it had done its worke.

3. He sees also, how this present *hower* is not more searching and dark, then it may be clear herewith, 1. that now after the *issue* of that opposition, which was betwixt the Christian faith in the first entry of the Gospell and that dying Apostate Church of the Jewes, and next with the Pagan Impire, after that new erection of the Gospell Church among the Gentils, which is now over; so is the greatest tryall of the latter dayes fixed on the decision of that long depending controverſie betwixt Christ and Antichrist. 2. That according to the Scripture we must believe that as after the manner of Egypt, that glorious triumph and delivery of the Church from Antichrist will be surlic carryed on, so the more near it comes to the last assault, and when this falls in to have its proper roome in the frame and administration of providence, the greater extremitie, terrour and darknesse may be expected also, as hath not been in any such manner formerly, yea with that unite and formidable conjunction of strenth and growing successe of

this adversary for a time, as the most established Christians may be in hazard to stagger. 3. That now is the day wherein the Lord will have men know what it is to have the Bible as the alone security of the Protestant religion, on which they must intirely rest no lesse then it is the sole rule and standard therof, which is a tryall worthy of all that expense of the pain, anguish, and wrestlings, that can now possibly attend the same.

4. Whilst the great standard of Antichrists Kingdome is visibly set up and brought to the open field, as its this day in the Church of France, and all human help taken out of sight; yet does he see herewith, 1 how this now is concluded, as the most infallible remedy to recover Popery, and that argument, to which they trust more then to Peters keyes to wit these sanguinary lawes by the sword, and rack, which they have again betaken themselves to, tho such an argument the Scripture never knew, which sober heathens would abhor, and gives up the credite of all religion to Atheism.

2. That there can be no more evidence of a desperate and sinking cause then is here, and how nothing else can support it but these weapons which are not against the Conscience, or by any terrors of the 2d death, but of the first. 3. that this is such an argument, (if they have not in a strang manner forgot,) which hath within these 100 Years been so fully answered, and by such an immediate appearence of God in the Kingdome

dome of France, that according to these measures of cruelty against the *Protestants* there, so was it returned in a *deluge of their own blood*, yea thus both the publick state of the Church and faith of the saints in the truth more deeply rooted; and tho we yet see not the end of *these wonders* and the *darke side* only of the dispensations of such a day, yet doe we know this *sore rod* on the Church is but as the *saw and axe in the carpenters hand*, who shall never *undoe* that *glorious worke* which Christ hath done and is still further perfecting on the ruins of *Antichrists Kingdome*.

5. Tho some unusuall *deeps* and *methods of subtilty* be now on foot also against the truth, yet he cannot but see how nothing could more effectually tend to confirm the *protestant cause* and take the *credite of popery* off the conscience of these in their *own profession* who are considerate and in the least serious herein; when the world must thus see, 1 how easy its for such to take any *measure and latitude* in the *doctrinals* of their profession, when this can most serve the juncture of such a time and *highten* or *narrow* the controversy betwixt them and the Reformed Church at their pleasure, so as to *sacrifice* the *Church of Rome* unto the *Court of Rome*, if no lesse can secure that end. 2. That the most horrid *Turkish Slavery* over mens bodies comes no such lenth, as that *strang claime* that these
now

now make of an *absolute impire* over mens *conscience* by the *sword*, and to put them to such a *tribute* of their obedience, and they shall then be secure, if they but come the lenth to sin against their light, and adventure on so small a thing as to goe to *Hell* and *perish eternally*, since its an externall and simulate profession of such a way they doe thus inforce from these, whom they see cannot in faith be perswaded hereof.

3. Yea it hath been too visible how much that *master-plot*, and *ingine*, hath in these times been working, to take men first off all *sense* of religion, and destroy them in the *morals* of *Christianity*, to make this *conquest* more easy, that such may have no *inward defence* and support against the terrour of *human violence*, yea in this way, when they have sought how to *divide Protestants among themselves* and betwixt *Rulers* and them, this seems the *last* and greatest ingine of all, how to *divide betwixt them and their God*, and *act the same plot*, which was laid betwixt *Balack* and *Balaam*, as knowing that its no naked shew or profession of the *Reformed religion* they need fear, so much as that *old protestant spirit* in the *power & life* therof, before which their interest could never stand, and dreads nothing so much as the *reviving* hereof, which as the *hand-writing upon the wall* did ever more threaten the fatall ruine of that Kingdome, then any *human power* or *strenth*.

6. Here also he finds just cause of astonishment, how *Kings* or *great men* in the earth should give their *power* to support the *Romish interest*, that hath been so visibly destructive to theirs, when its not possible to deny how its *first* advance and progresse to that *supreme hight*, which it once attained, and the *declining* of the *civill impire*, did by the same *steps* goe together, untill *Magistracy* was turned as unto a *dead image and shaddow*, except its being *exlivened* by their *breath* and authority, as it was during the whole *hight* of that *Antichristian power*; nor will it be denyed that in these *late times* the *French Monarchy* was never more near its dissolution in its *right line*, then by the *Catholick league* there; and would seem not easy to be forgot, how *Henry the 3d*, who had most sought to crush the *Protestants* there in pursuance of that *league*, was at last constrained to flee to such for help, or by whom he was *killed*; and that *Heroick Prince Henry the 4.* was first *stobbed* in the *mouth* and then in the *heart*; yea that the *publick records* of that *nation* cannot possibly deny how the *house of Burbon* owes its *power* and *preservation* more to the *Protestants*, (without whom it had been fully extinct,) then *Ahasuerus* did to *Mordecai the Jew* for what he found written in the *Chronicles of Persia*, when the *decree* was then *past* to destroy all the seed of the *Jewes*.

7. As in no times past was ever a greater expectation then is now, which way the scale will turn, and what will be the end of these wonders, when the nearest events of Providence are so darke and amazing; so does he find this, in some extraordinary way called for, to be still, and see what God will doe for his Church, and with humble confidence look for some dispensation as hath not hitherto been in this extreme exigence, and tho he doe not appeare in that way and manner as in former times, that it shall be in a way more signally glorious, beyond what hath formerly been; yea does in faith thus judge, that then is the Churches day broke, and hath found the sure way of her strenght, and right lieth of duty, when her hope and confidence is taken of all visible refuges and intirely settled on her invisible head, and his promise put to suite by prayer without fainting herein. It is sure the truth & faithfullnesse of God stands ingadged for Antichrists fall, as well as for salvation by Christ, and since he hath said this adversary shall be broke and brought down, it must surely be, tho the dust of the ground should rise for this end, and now is the faith of the saints called for becoming the greatnesse of such an assurance, on which are the eyes of men, of their own conscience, of the elect Angels, yea of the glorious God, to see who does indeed credit him in this day, when there is no sensible support herein; and tho

tho it is now like to shake fore the *departure* of many from the *faith* who had some visible profession therof, yet may it be hoped for, that the *turn of the next tyde* shall bring in *moe*, with a *solid and true increase to the Church*, then these sad dayes doe now take off.

CHARACT. VI. It is thus a *confirmed Christian* should be specially considered, as one who is not only at *rest on the known certainty of his faith*, but is ready to render some account of the *solid rationall grounds and demonstrations* hereof, unto all who ask after the same, and doth thus judge, 1. that these are the *proper and appointed means* which the Lord hath afforded for the greatest *confirmation* of mens faith within time, yea preferable to any *externall miracles*, which are more extraordinary and remott *assistances* thereto. 2. That these are given as so great an *helper to his joy*, and *excitment* of his affections to follow the Lord fully, as makes him wonder how the greatnesse of these things, which men are called to believe, can come near their thoughts, and yet not more taken up about this *confirming worke*. 3. That the too visible neglect hereof, both with respect to the *youth and community of professours* in the Church, seems one of the sad, and *fundamentall defects* of this day. The reasons hereof, with some clear view of these *means* which might most answer such an end, are *briefly offered*, in this *preceding worke*.

CHA-

CHARACT. VII. A truly confirmed Christian may in the last place be herein also considered, as such whose faith being oft tryed through all these stages of Christianity he hath been taken; hath some proper record of the most choise, and signall confirmations of his life, to improve the same not only for his own support in that last warfare of death, but for strenthning the faith of others; wherein he does thus judge, 1. that there could be no true support or relief from religion here in the earth, if it cannot bear out then, and that death is the great touchstone and tryall, when the true value and difference betwixt things of an eternall truth and substance, and the things of this world, will be best seen. 2. He reckons each real Christian, by his profession then sisted and accountable, even by some explicit personall testimony, to put to his seal that God is true, and bear the same witness with his last and dying breath to the truth of Christianity, which he gave in the whole course of his life; and of that joy, complacence and assurance of mind, which he hath found, and now hath in the way of truth, so as to presse the same on his dearest relations as their alone true interest. 3. He sees also, how honorable it is for the Lord, that such whose faith hath been oft tryed, (and when thus with joy and admiration he can look back on the most pressing and conspicuous conflicts of time,) should have it their last worke to pay

in some tribute of praise, unto him whose word & promise unto them did yet never fail. 4. He accounts the more *weighty tryalls* he hath been carryed thorow in his Christian warfare, doth both give more accessse to this service, and adds more to the value of such a testimony. 5. He judgeth this one special way and advantage, wherby one generation might declare the truth and faithfullnesse of God unto an other, in a family line and relation, to shew forth thus that the Lord is upright, that he is their rock, and with him is no unrighteousnesse; yea which should be matter of unspeakable joy, when now in his turn he can say that such hath the Lord been to him, what was Davids dying words 1 Kings. 1:14. *Who hath delivered my soul out of all distresses*, how that in no trouble or exigence of his life he was ever left without a door of outgate; and thus also with Caleb Josh. 14:10. to give in some such wittnesse for God I am now near the close of time, and does testify, that the word of his truth, and promise he hath surely accomplished, which hath brought me safe and honourably through, when such as did dicredit the same by misbelief, and sought after another refuge, found all their confidences fail. 6. And knowing likewise how great a surprizall death may be, and that such as have shined in their day, may yet set under a cloud and goe silent off the stage, he judgeth it the more needfull to have such a piece of his dying worke prepared, as one of the choise

ost legacies he can bequath to his surviving friends; in a *season* when it hath usually the greatest advantage of *weight* and acceptance: it being still qualified with *Christian prudence*, and *humble sobriety*, so as all may see its whole intent is to commend to mens conscience the *way of truth* and *godlinesse* and not themselves, and thus only direct, for the *proper use*, and improvment of their nearest relations. I know it may be strang to some, what is spoke upon this head; but as its sure the present day hath its *duty*, and each time of our life hath some *proper worke*, so I humbly judge, that this seems to fall in as the *last service of a dying Christian* to his generation, to deliver of his hand the truth which he had received and hath oft *proven*, with his *confirmatory seal* and *testimony* therto, and now in some more then ordinarie way called for in this hower of great darknesse, when if that security of the *absolute promises* stood not good to the Church, we might fear *religion* might quickly wear out, and *truth* perish from the earth; and as so solemn and weighty a thing should be mannaged with much humble prudence, so it may be judged that no serious and *observing* Christian but hath some peculiere *ingadgments* under which they find themselves sifted even beyond others, yea some such *singulare confirmations* in the *journall* of their life, that should be not easy to *hide* under the ground, where the *strenthning of others* hereby

by is concerned, and that such should not then leave the *crosse* of *Jesus Christ* at a *losse*, or part therewith without their *testimony*, which hath left them at so great an *advantage*. And though this is not to offer particulare *rules* in such a duty, but that *Christian wisdome* must direct herein, as the present *case* is *circumstantiate*, yet might it be hoped, were this more taken to heart, it should be a singulare *mean*, to put a more deep impressiion of mens *dying worke* on their own spirit, even whilst they are in *health*, to *excite* their surviving friends, and to keep *religion* thus *alive* in a *family state*, and *relation*, and gain a more venerable *respect* to the same on mens conscience, yea to fix also stronger *ingagements* on the *succeeding offspring*.

Thus is presented here a short *Idea* of the *solid and judicious worke* of *Christian confirmation* in the *truths*, under these forgoing *Characters*, to shew how rare an atteinment of religion this is, yea to present herein a speciall *series* and *scale* of the greatest *steps* in this *confirmatory worke*, by which it should be followed, and where none of these may be parted from other, though some be of an higher and more absolute use for such an end. And if it should be objected here, what needs any such expense of *time* or *pains* in this case, when its sure the essentiall truths of the *Gospell* are not *questioned*, and that without *internall evidence* of the spirit, no *externall means* of this kind can

be of use. I know that its the alone worke of the *holy Ghost*, to beget a *divine* and *supernaturall* *faith*, without which the furthest *light*, and *objective evidence*, though backed with a continued dispensation of *externall miracles*, could never bear Christians out, either as to *duty* or *comfort*, in their passage thorow time; yea nothing is in the least here to subject the *credite* of our *faith* to mens *rationall comprehension*, but rather tends to enervate wholly the strength of any such *tenet* and take off all pretence for the same; But its sure also, I must quite all *solid security* in the way of religion, and any clear founding in the *light and certainty of the Scripture*, or admitt these things as undeniable, & that *supernaturall faith* is the most *highly rationall light* thats within time, and that none who professe the name of Christ can be of so low a *size*, as should not be pressed and *excited* to be much about this *ground worke* of knowing the *truth*, and *principles* of their profession upon its *own evidence*; yea are thus called as *new born babes* to drink in the *sincere milk of the word*, & *Pet. 2.* Which, as its clearly in the *originall*, is the *rationall milk of the word*, to be thus received no lesse on *conviction* and *certainty* of the judgment, then with the out going of their *affections*. 2. That as its not conceivable how a *true and firme assent* can be to *divine truth*, but on its *known certainty*, so here is no resolving of the Christians *faith* on the strongest *rationall evidences* here-
of,

of, yet must it still be *resolved* on the *testimony* of God, made clear & evident to them to be such. 3. It is sure also, the Lord hath not given so large a measure of these *grounds* and *demonstrations* of his truth with such *redoubled arguments* of that kind, to be of so small regard, as is with most, but for some *great*, and *universall use* hereof to the wholl Church, and knew how needfull such *assurances* to the faith of his people would be, whilst they are on the earth. 4. That these *means*, which tend most convincingly to found a *rational assurance* in the judgment, are the proper *vehicle of the Spirit of God*, by which his *sealing worke*, should be both sought and expected; nor can I judge how the credite and use hereof should be so small, and not on the same ground quite any *externall ordinance* of the Gospell, which without the Spirit of the Lord can never profite, nor how we should expect and suite his *confirming worke* on the soul, when these greatest confirming means, which he hath given to the Church, have no just weight; but o how wonderfull a teacher is the holy Ghost, when such ordinarie means fail, and are *inaccessible*, by furnishing his people then with these strongest *arguments of love and power*, who having had but small *measures of light*, yet were not unfaithfull to improve the smallest degree of such a talent. 5. Yea so great a thing is it, to attain a *solid faith of things* wholly remott from our

sense, and so far above the reach and apprehension of nature, or to have an absolute relyance on an invisible refuge, for our present and eternall state, as no common assent can answer, when the very rest and quiet of the soul must needs ly in the sure and firme perswasion hereof. 6. It is too visible also how little the practicall use of such a mean hath yet been essayed in the Church, that all who are members thereof might no lesse know the strength and firmnesse of the foundation of their faith by its own evidence, then the generall articles of religion, but whilst the most usuall instructing worke lyes almost wholly about the noetick part of Divinity, there seems not that serious regard to presse the dianoetick part hereof on mens conscience, as if this were to be restricted to a few who are more knowing, learned, and of an inquisitive spirit about the rationall certainty of the truth, and for whom these choise and abundant helps of this kind, which are in this age, seem more peculiarly directed. Its sure, that the Christian faith in the first times did remarkably then spread and prevail, by these clear evidences hereof to the judgment, made effectually by the spirit of God, more then by extraordinary miracles, nor knew they otherwise what it was to be Christians but by imbracing the truth with a full assurance of understanding, no lesse then of delight and affection. But if it be objected, it is not the same case now, where religion is planted in a nation, and hath an uncontrollable publick profession under the sup-

support of *humane lawes*; I know no weight this can have, except that should be admitt therwith, *quod nunc nascuntur Christiani, sed non fiunt.* 7. Yea is it not sure, (tho it seems little understood,) that the *primary grounds and evidences* of our faith are not only as to their *end demonstrative* of the truth and divinity of the Scripture, but are upon the *matter* such *demonstrations* also which most natively result from the same by infallible *consequences*, and are thus to be accounted not as *human* but *divine arguments*, given us by the spirit of God.

8. I shall but further add, how such as doe seriously *ponder things*, will find this *demonstration* to be not more important then clear, that to be a *confirmed Christian* and a *confirmed Protestant* are *convertible terms*; and that if these as are under that deplorable bondage and *darknesse* of *popery* were but once *awaked* to see the *truth & certainty* of the *Christian faith*, by its *intrinsic* and *objective evidence*, and taken off that brutish credulity and dependance on the alone credite of others herein, it might be said the *strongest ingine* to hold up that profession were then broke, and should see the *doctrine and rule of faith* to be of such *full and perspicuous evidence* from the Scripture, as without *blasphemy* they could not seek from the Lord to give them a *plainer rule*, then what he hath there given.

R E A D E R.

ITs like you may think *strang*, how these few sheets in the close fall in here, after the forgoing part was finished; but tho they meet in one designe and interest, yet was not this then intended untill the former was done, and if it might tend to a solid use and fruit unto any, I shall forbear a further *Apology* herein. I may truly say, the weight of the subject hath carryed it some further length then was designed, when I so much sought to be short, as
I aim

I aim at in any thing of this kind, that through my desire to avoide any unnecessare multiplying of words, I least it may make some things seem a little dark at the first looke, tho I hope not upon any serious perusall of the same. Two things I must further crave leave to add; 1. that when some succinct view of the great assistances and confirmations of our faith is here offered, which these of the lowest capacity of the Church, might with that advantage improve, as in a few howers, by reading it some times over, may be so far impressed on their mind and judgement, that they could give some clear and judicious account thereof; it may be by such but seriously weighed & taken to heart of what concern the use hereof is: 2. That I would humbly judge also, it were a most speciall service for the truth in this day, to have some short Directory and remembrancer of the great acts of the Lord and monuments of his Providence now under the New Testament, in that maner held forth as might most tend to some universall use of all within the Church. I confesse my desire pressed me to some smal essay herein, with intent to have joyned it to this worke, but having with much conviction laid this wholly aside, as to any further appearence that way, so is it with an earnest desire, that some more qualified, might take to heart and under their hand so great a service both for their generation and posterity. It is sure the Lord hath designed his people to be taught the greatnesse of his workes as well as the precepts of his word, and as no duty is more pressed then this under the Old Testament both as to Publick and Family instruction, so are we no lesse accountable in these last times for this improvment of such as are of known publick, and uncontrollable evidence, and should be the care of each age to have that solemn remembrance kept up hereof, so as not a few, but the very multitude within the Church might be as a publick Library and Repository of the same.

F I N I S.

fir
ar
fir
me
hen
na
ow
age
mes
dg
ac
kin
ild
ut
ma
nts
pat
se
me
re
de
an
ke
on
th
res
ra
th
in
n
h
y
h
n